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# POONA'S GREAT DAYS





# POONA'S GREAT DAYS

*describing the*

*Palace of the Peshwas when they were paramount in India ;*

*The British Embassy & its Residents ;*

*The Battles of Kirkec & Koregaon,*

*after which the last British Resident became the first Commissioner*

*to administer the Peshwa's territories on behalf of*

*the Honourable the East India Company.*

“Truth is stranger than Fiction, and considerably more interesting.”

*Michael Barrington.*

POONA

Published at the Sign of the Crown and Golden Streamer

1944



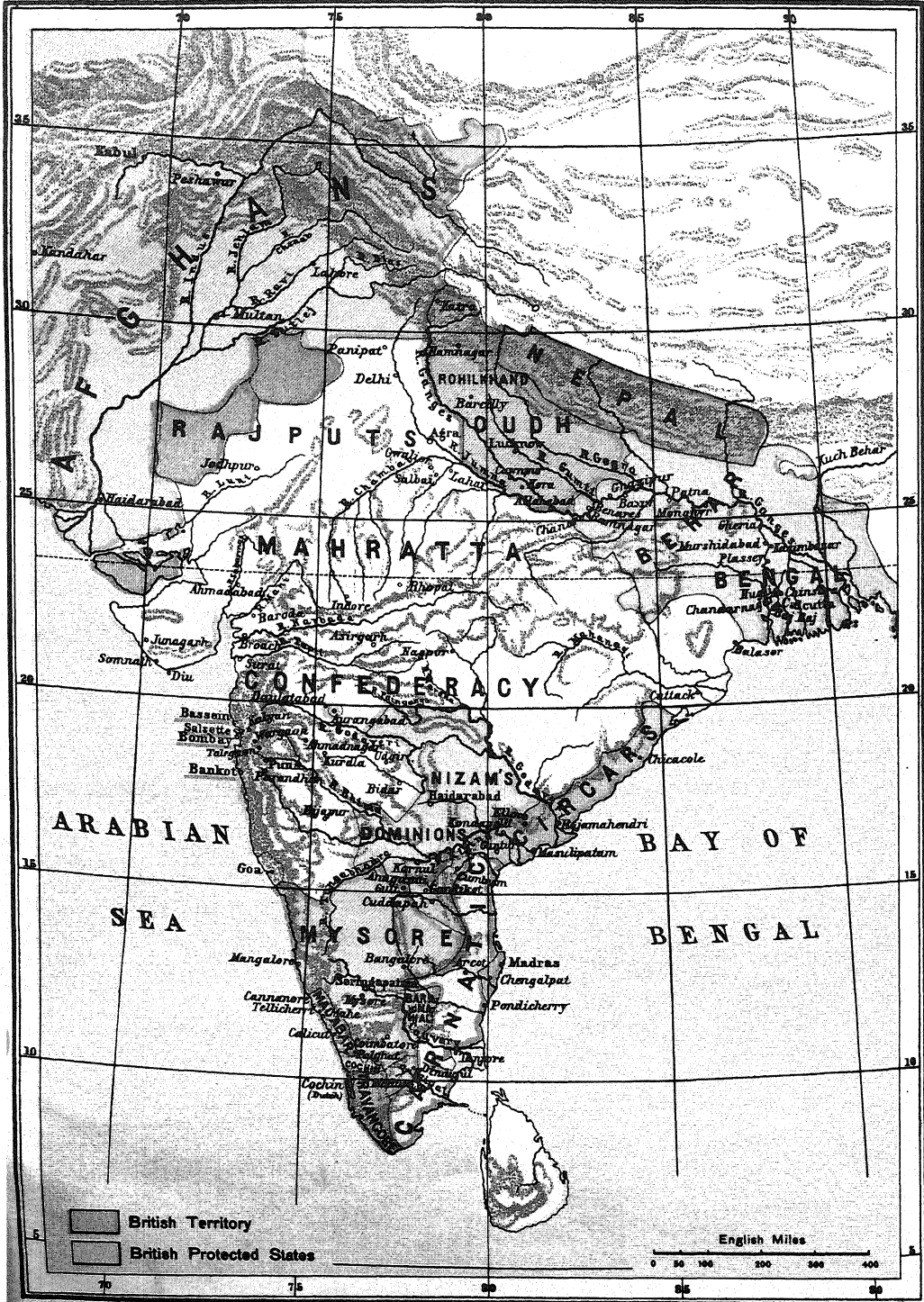
#### NOTE

Poona Cantonments did not exist at the time covered by this book. Poona City is the Indian city of Poona, which would be shewn in the bottom right hand corner of the plan on page 38A, if the plan included a mile more ground to the South.



# MAP I INDIA in 1795.

While Nana Phadnavis was still Regent for Madhavrao II; & Tipu still reigned in Mysore.



From Joppen's "Historical Atlas of India" by kind permission of Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd.

# KEY

## TO THE INDIAN GOVERNMENTS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT.

**POONA** - *THE PESHWA* (whose significance is explained in the Prelude).

**CALCUTTA** - *THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL* (for the Honourable East India Company. When Queen Victoria took over the administration of British India from that Company, the Governor-General began to discharge Viceregal duties as well. His Capital has also since moved to Delhi).

### MARATHA PRINCIPALITIES

<u><b>CAPITAL</b></u>	<u><b>Surname of Maratha Ruling Chief.</b></u>
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Gwalior	- <i>SCINDIA</i>	} All owed allegiance to the Peshwa at Poona. (Now the first 3 are independent States. Nagpur is capital of British Central Provinces)
Baroda	- <i>GAEKWAR</i>	}
Indore	- <i>HOLKAR</i>	}
Nagpur	- <i>BHONSLE</i>	}
Satara & Kolhapur	- (see Map IV) both ruled by descendants of Shivaji.	

**HYDERABAD**- *THE NIZAM*. The founder of this Kingdom was "Nizam" or Viceroy of the Deccan for the Mogul Emperor in Delhi. As the Mogul power waned after Aurangzebe's death, this Viceroy made his own appointment hereditary.

**MYSORE** - Warlike and large (see Map I) under Muslim usurpers, until the death of *TIPU SULTAN* 1799. Then General Arthur Wellesley restored order, more modest boundaries, (see Map IV) and a Hindu Prince of the legitimate dynasty.



## PRELUDE

THIS BOOKLET begins with the arrival of the first British Resident Ambassador to the "Peshwa" at Poona in 1786, and ends on New Year's Day 1818, after the last "Peshwa" had left Poona.

Who was the "Peshwa", and of what was Poona the Capital?

In 1795 the "Mahratta Confederacy" (see Map I opposite) covered roughly half of India; and all these vast territories looked to Poona, whence the "Peshwa" exercised his rule and influence. Ninety years earlier, in 1705, these lands were uniformly part of the great Mogal Empire ruled by the Emperor Aurangzeb and extending from the Oxus, flowing into the sea of Aral, to the Delta of the Cauvery near Ceylon thus including Afghanistan and almost all India<sup>1</sup>

One step further back will bring to life the originator of this extraordinary Mahratta expansion. He flourished in the first half of the reign of the great Mogal Emperor Aurangzeb. While Cromwell in England reaped nemesis for destroying Church and State, and while King Charles II reigned in the restored polity, a Mahratta Nobleman<sup>2</sup> from Poona, named Shivaji, (born 1627 died 1680) stirred the warrior spirit of the Hindus in the Western Ghats. With disciplined and very mobile forces, consisting mostly of light cavalry, he led from October to June each year plundering raids into the valleys and plains where the Muslim administrations held sway. Writhing thus, but also serving in turn different muslim potentates, Shivaji succeeded in dominating the coastal strip, known as the Konkan, between the sea and the Deccan, and in setting up his own Government in the almost

1646-  
1680

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1 Except the southern tip and the Malabar coast, west and south of Mysore, and the European trading Depots on the sea board.

2. Shivaji's grandfather was head of the ancient Yadav family which had ruled as Emperors from Deogiri till the 12th century (Kincaid). Deogiri is now called Daulatabad (see Map).

inaccessible fort of Raygar. Shivaji's Kingdom reached to within twenty miles of Surat in the North, and just enclosed Goa at its southern end. On the upper reaches of the Bhima and Kistna rivers respectively this Mahratta State swelled to 100 and 130 miles in width, but for most of its length of over 300 miles it reached inland only 30 or 50 miles.

1680 Shivaji died in 1680 (six years before King Charles II); and his most powerful foe, the Mogal Emperor Aurangzeb, not only outlived him by twenty-seven years, but beheaded Shivaji's son and kept the grandson as a page at Delhi.

1318-1685 In 1685 the Deccan had been under Mahomedan rule for 370 years, ever since, in 1318 the Afgan Conquerors from Delhi subdued even the Malabar coast. For 370 years the Hindus in the conquered area had submitted to tolerant and adaptable Muslim Kings without being driven into revolt. Aurangzeb was a devoted orthodox muslim and, finding these Kings heretical, he demolished them in turn. Thus 1685-6 he not only broke up the rooted fabric of Government in which the Hindus had lived, but his uncompromising missionary activities—his extra tax on every non-muslim and the destruction of many Hindu temples—stung the Hindus into revolt.

After Aurungzib's death in 1707, his Viceroys in the Deccan, Bengal and Oudh continued to pay lip service to his successors at Delhi, but in fact became independent and made their titles hereditary. In this way the Mogal Viceroy of the Deccan originated what are now the dynasty and dominions of His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad.

1707 In the anarchy following the death of the Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 the borders of the Mahratta State left by Shivaji in 1680 were rapidly advanced. Shivaji's grandson, Shahu, after his lenient upbringing as a hostage at the Mogal Court, was not spirited or brilliant, 1714 when freed. He delegated most of his power to his Brahmin chief

minister or "Peshwa" whose great qualities he appreciated. Then 1720  
 the title of Peshwa too was handed from father to son. Conspicuous  
 ability showed itself in four successive generations of this family of the  
 Peshwas from 1714 to 1773. The prestige of Shivaji's descendant  
 survives to this day (his representatives include Raja Shahu Pratapsing,  
 living at Satara, and the Raja of Kolhapur); but throughout the 18th  
 century the real power was wielded by the Peshwa (or minister).  
 Through the Peshwa passed the loyalty which even the greatest martial  
 chiefs and ruling princes of the Mahrattas owed to his sovereign,  
 Shivaji's descendant reigning quietly at Satara. Yet no Peshwa could  
 take the field without previously taking leave humbly of the Raja.  
 Satara, the Royal domain (now Satara District) possessed a sacred  
 perpetual peace, was exempted from Military raids, and when any  
 Chieftain entered it, he laid aside all marks of his own rank and his  
 drums ceased to beat.<sup>\*</sup>

The Peshwas were distinguished both as Generals and Statesmen,  
 and Map 1 (page a) shows the great extent of the Mahratta dominions  
 which they conquered and controlled from Poona until the beginning  
 of the 19th Century.

In the 1740s and 1750s the wars between the British and 1746-  
 French Kings were reflected in their subjects trading in India. The 1763  
 Honourable the East India Company had either to be expelled by the  
 French or, like the French, to enter Indian Politics and raise defence  
 forces. The first clashes were in Southern India around Madras and  
 Pondichery.

In 1757 the corrupt and unstable ruler of Bengal attacked and 1757  
 plundered the British trading post on the Hoogly. Colonel Clive

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<sup>\*</sup>See Eld. Thompson's "The Making of the Indian Princes" (Humphrey Milford).



aged 31 and Admiral Watson sailed from Madras with 600 English Infantry and 1,500 Madras sepoys and 10 guns to restore the settlement and to obtain satisfaction from a Prince with many millions of subjects, 15,000 Cavalry, 35,000 Infantry and 53 heavy guns mostly served by French gunners. The Nawab of Bengal and his host fled from the  
 1757 field of Plassey, and the East India Company was left the most stable authority in Bengal. Trade is not possible in a land without law and order. Gradually the Company took on the responsible administration of Bengal, the richest province of Hindustan; and Calcutta became the Capital of the Governor-General of the British-controlled territories in India.

From that moment the Company ranked among the premier sovereign authorities in India, and had permanently to shoulder the expenses of Diplomatic Missions and Armed Forces. At that time the greatest coherent power in India was the Mahratta Confederacy controlled from Poona. Even Mahadji Scindia of Gwalior who dominated Northern India owed allegiance to the Peshwa. This explains why he was made guarantor for the adherence of the Peshwa  
 1782 and the Company to the treaty of Salbai in 1782. This treaty ended the first embroilment of the British with the Mahrattas, foolishly provoked and disastrously conducted by the Bombay Government, which may have been jealous of the lustre won by Calcutta. The scales were only levelled again by the exertions of two officers, Colonel Goddard and Captain Popham, and the tiny forces which they led across India from Bengal at the order of the Governor-General Warren Hastings.

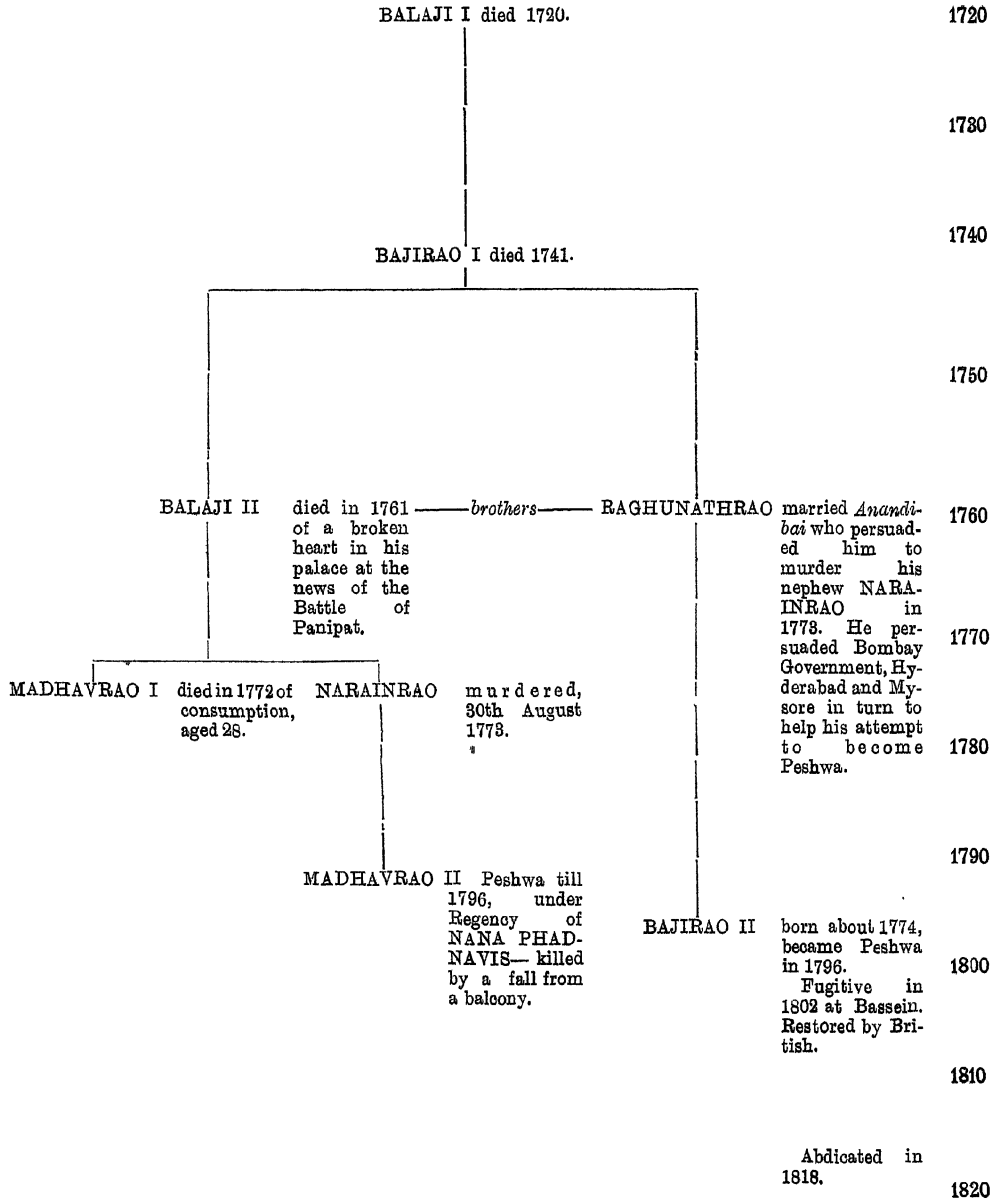
Regrettable and unnecessary though the conflict was, it drew the Peshwa and the Company's Governor-General in Bengal into closer relations. The treaty was negotiated among equals and a long period of harmony seemed to be in store. Peace and security were what the Company needed. The Governor-General decided to keep a permanent



# GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE PESHWAS

17

17







Ambassador at the Peshwa's Court; and Mr. Charles Malet, the first 1786  
to hold this appointment, arrived at Poona in 1786.

He made great friends with the 12-year old Peshwa Madhavrao II, with that wise veteran, the Regent Nana Phadnavis, and with the Mahratta Court. To understand who these people were we must go back to 1761, when a great Peshwa, Balaji II, died at Puna on 1761  
Parvati Hill of a broken heart at the news of the defeat of the great Mahratta Army by the Afghans at Panipat near Delhi (see Table).

His son of sixteen, Madhavrao I, succeeded by his brilliantly able administration in restoring the damage suffered at Panipat; only to die 1761-1772  
of consumption aged 28 in 1772. Balaji's brother Raghunathrao had tried to oust his nephew in 1761; and now in 1773, egged on by his ambitious wife he arranged the murder of his second nephew, Narayanrao, who had been Peshwa for a few months. The Chief Justice bravely 1773  
accused the murderer in public; and soon a posthumous son was born to Narayanrao. A Council of Regency led by the Phadnavis, or Lord High Treasurer, took charge and governed for this baby to whom the country loyally and chivalrously rallied. This was the boy to whom Malet was accredited.

The Regent had to be watchful until the death of old Raghunathrao, whose formidable wife Anandibai never ceased from plotting to make him Peshwa. But, though he did die about the time of Malet's arrival, he left a son, BAJIRAO, whom Nana Phadnavis kept under close supervision in honourable confinement. This Prince was the same age as the Peshwa. He was handsome and affable to meet, a good horseman and a good scholar; but his character consisted of the worst qualities of his parents. As we shall see he turned out cruel and cowardly, greedy and weak.

When the Peshwa Madhavrao came of age, he kept Nana Phadnavis as his Chief Minister, and remained under his guardian's

control. At this stage he began a secret correspondence with his  
 1796 cousin, perhaps from loneliness and curiosity. In 1796 Nana reproved him harshly for this. Either wounded by this reproof or else when delirious with fever, he threw himself from a balcony on to a fountain and was killed.

His cousin Bajirao succeeded him; and dropped the Pilot, Nana Phadnavis, roughly. "With Nana departed all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha Government" as Colonel Palmer the Resident wrote when Nana Phadnavis died in 1800.<sup>1</sup>

Bajirao was soon embarrassed. Scindia of Gwalior came and settled down at Puna with his French-officered army to control Maratha affairs by controlling the Peshwa, as Nana had done.

From 1798, when Buonaparte was in Egypt, until 1812 when he withdrew baffled from Moscow, the whole world "rang with the Corsican's strong tramp". During those 14 years he steadily cherished a plan to found an Eastern Empire. It was intended at first that Tipu Sultan of Mysore and the Mahratta leaders<sup>2</sup> would join him to drive the British from India. In this situation it was the duty of the British Governor-General to be quite certain who were his allies.  
 1799 Tipu was found not to be, and was killed in the last Mysore war in 1799.

The presence at Puna of Scindia's Army with its French officers, by eclipsing the Peshwa and confusing Mahratta affairs, spoilt all attempts of the Governor-General to secure his relations with the

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1. If Nana Phadnavis had had an able son, it is likely that he would have started a new dynasty ruling the Mahratta Confederacy on behalf of effete Peshwas, themselves deputies of the Rajas at Satara. A continuation of Nana's policy would certainly have avoided clashing with the Company; and the Confederacy as such might have taken on a new lease of life, had he been so worthily followed as was the first Peshwa 100 years before.

2. At Raja Shahu's palace at Satara can be seen to this day a large number of paintings on Glass: an exquisite picture of Napoleon I's coronation in the presence of the Pope; a companion picture of his victorious entry into Berlin. These pictures brought his Power vividly before the Mahratta princes whom he wooed. Other pictures are of French officers.

Peshwa, and to restore the Peshwa's authority as a great stabilising power in India.

In October 1802, however, the Ruler of Indore, an able soldier, came to Puna with his army to oust Scindia from the control of affairs there and to avenge his brother's death upon Bajirao (see foot of p. 14). He totally defeated the combined forces of Scindia and the Peshwa. The latter withdrew to Bassein, a British Coastal Town, and signed a treaty with the British under which they agreed to restore him. Major-General the Honourable Arthur Wellesley, the Governor-General's younger Brother, advancing from the Mysore border, conducted a skilful campaign culminating at the hard-fought Battle of Assaye 23rd September 1803, which achieved the restoration of the Peshwa.

1802

Thenceforward the continued rule of Bajirao Peshwa depended on British force, since his own character and ability could not sustain his dominions; and furthermore he was under an obligation to the British. Hearts deformed like his do not feel gratitude, but long to see the last of a benefactor whose presence is a reminder of the weakness that called in his help. Moreover, as appears in Chapter II, the British Residents with whom he had to deal were all fine men of great strength of character. This is confirmed by the reaction they evoke in petty breasts. When Bajirao, at the great Dassrah Ceremonial Parade of 19th October 1817, caused his cavalry almost to ride down Elphinstone's token detachment, he was giving rein to the same spite as impels the loose gibes with which small-minded writers smother Elphinstone and men of his stature. It is revealing to be told by a Mahratta Brahmin today that he holds Elphinstone in grateful and respectful remembrance for his wise and firm administration of Mahratta institutions when he took over the Peshwa's territories as Commissioner in 1818 and later as Governor of Bombay. The same man had not a good word to say for Bajirao, and in no way resents the memory of the battle of Kirkee. Chapters I and II are almost entirely written by a patriotic Mahratta, Rao Bahadur D. B. Parasnis.



The wars between the rulers of Gwalior, Indore and Nagpur, whom Bajirao was impotent to keep harnessed as a team, had devastated Central India. Much land had been ravaged and much had gone out of cultivation when the peasant joined the army. There had been no effective plan to demobilise and resettle these fighting men, and, by 1817, they had been moving about for several years in great marauding forces, many thousands strong, under free lance commanders who could only pay their men with plunder. These were the PINDARIES.

1817 From a political and remunerative point of view this state of affairs was unsatisfactory to all Governments concerned; and particularly so to the Company which wanted an orderly, peaceful and prosperous India such as could pay its revenue and engage in trade. The Governor-General Lord Hastings, a professional soldier and a great man, looked to his ally the Peshwa to help in his grand campaign to destroy the Pindari nuisance; and encouraged him to recruit troops for this purpose. Meanwhile Hastings concentrated to the North all the available British Sepoy and European troops for the campaign. The Peshwa now had numerous troops assembled at Poona while the minimum of British detachments was left in Western India. This situation uncovered Bajirao's true disposition and inclination. He thought that if he could announce the defeat of a British force, no matter what its strength, that news would rally the great Mahratta Chiefs further north to unite with him to expel the British from India.

In his plans he sought also the help of the Pindaries, whom he was bound by treaty to oppose.

5 Nov. 1817 His opportunism in turning on his ally proved what he hated to admit in his heart (though he might admit it in diplomacy) that his power now derived solely from his British ally's support. He was an exile from his capital three hours after he attacked Elphinstone's Residency and a pensioner six months later.

8 June 1818

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## I. SHANWAR WADA

*The fortified Palace in Poona City from which the Peshwas  
swayed the destiny of India in the 18th Century*

(Unfold Table p. e for reference)

THE Shanwar Wada was the most magnificent and stately mansion that was ever built in Poona by the Peshwas in the 18th century. The foundation stone of the building was laid by Bajirao I (1720-1740) on Saturday, the 10th of January 1730, being an auspicious day. <sup>10 Jan. 1730</sup> On this occasion, according to state records, Rs. 1-8 were spent in charity. There is an interesting legend about the site selected for this historic building. While riding over this ground, the Peshwa Bajirao saw, to his great astonishment, a hare chasing a hound. This struck home to his mind that there must be something very auspicious in this place, where a hare forgetting its natural timidity boldly chased a dog. He at once resolved to secure the site and build there a house for himself and his family. At that time, this piece of land was included in the "*Kasba*" or village of Poona which was enclosed by a mud wall. It contained only a few huts of fishermen and weavers, from whom Bajirao acquired five acres of land by exchanging them for suitable sites in Mangalwar Peith, and commenced the building rapidly.<sup>1</sup> Within an interval of two years a two-storeyed Palace with three quadrangles sprang up to be the focus and centre of all the life and movement of the Maratha power. The opening ceremony of the Palace was performed according to Hindu religious customs on Saturday, the 22nd January 1732, when Rs. 15½ were paid in charity <sup>22 Jan. 1732</sup> to Brahmans. It is stated that the total expenditure incurred on this Palace came up to Rs. 16,110.

As conceived originally the plan of the Palace was very simple and elegant, and only the *Diwan Khana* or the main hall of audience contained some ornamental carvings. It was the third Peshwa, Balaji Bajirao (1740-1761), who made several additions and alterations, and added much splendour and beauty to this fine mansion. He devoted

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<sup>1</sup> Bajirao built his elephant lues on the spot where Shivaji's boyhood home the "*Rang Mahal*" had stood (Kincaid).

his store of knowledge as well as money and patience to turning out this edifice to be an object of great delight and admiration. Later on, Nana Phadnawis, Prime Minister to Sawai Madhavrao (1774-1795), constructed a few more rooms and halls, galleries and towers, pavilions and fountains, and made the royal residence truly majestic and grand, worthy of the great rulers of Maharashtra.

The Palace was destroyed by fire in 1827 and now there remain only the fortified enclosure wall, with the five gateways, and nine bastions. It is therefore impossible to form a correct idea of the actual building which existed in the hey-day of the Peshwa's power. The foundations of the Palace and various other buildings in the extensive compound which covers about five acres of ground have been recently unearthed by the Archæological Department. They give us a faint idea of the original plans of the building but no picture of the real magnificence and greatness of this royal mansion. It is said that only one mirror-hall survived the great fire of 1827, but that too was scattered owing to the want of historical interest in those days. It is only latterly that Government have been taking great interest in the preservation of objects of historical and archæological interest, thanks to H. E. Sir George Lloyd, whose genuine interest and wonderful energy have enabled us to see the old foundations and remains of the Peshwas' Palace, which were buried under heaps of débris for nearly a century.

The main building of the Palace consisted of six storeys, and it is said that the spire of the temple at Alandi could be seen from the uppermost terrace of this building. Sawai Madhavrao Peshwa used to enjoy a beautiful view of the Parvati temple and of the city from the terrace of his *Meghadambari* room, and often spent evening hours looking at the stars in the sky through a telescope which was presented to him by Sir Charles Malet, the British Resident at his Court. The height of the main building can be imagined by the height of the existing *Nagarkhana* (music gallery) from the top of which the royal standard of the Peshwas waved proudly day and night. The main entrance to the Palace is known as Delhi Gate as it faces Delhi in the

North. Raja Shahu of Satara told Bajirao I not to put the main fortified gate to the north as it would mean a disrespect to the Mogul Emperor of Delhi, whom Raja Shahu held in respect and to whom he acknowledged his allegiance. In deference to the wishes of his master the Peshwa stopped the work; and the present massive gate which still indicates the former greatness of this Palace was the work of Bajirao's son, Balaji, who completed it in 1751, 3 years after Raja Shahu's death. It may be worthy of note here that the design of the entrance gate is exactly a copy of that of Indraprastha, the ancient Hindu capital of the Pandawas, in old Delhi. The Peshwas, being devoted Hindus, selected the design of the gate of Indraprastha, or Purana Killa, instead of imitating the magnificent gates of the Mogul capital. 1751

As mentioned above the Palace had five principal gates and they were named as follows:—

1. Delhi Darwaja—as it faces the north.
2. Ganesh Darwaja—as it was near the famous Ganpati Mahal.
3. Mastani Darwaja—which is mentioned in old records as Natakshala gate was named after Mastani, the beautiful mistress of Bajirao I, who was brought from Raja Chhatrasal of Bundelkhand. [C. A. Kincaid, on the other hand, gives this account of the romance which colours this gate. On one occasion Bajirao I had gone into the heart of Central India with a large Maratha army to rescue Bundelkhand from a Mogal attack. While the Maratha forces were thus heavily engaged, another Mogal army penetrated into Hyderabad. The Nizam asked for Maratha aid. But the king, with both Peshwa and army away, did not know how to meet his appeal. Chimnaji Appa, Bajirao's younger brother, heard of the King's dilemma and offered to raise a force of volunteers, and to take them with him to assist the Nizam. The King, pleased at the boy's spirit, accepted the offer. And Chimnaji and his volunteers did so well that he drove the Mogals back towards Delhi and captured their General's Camp. Among the spoils was a beautiful dancing girl called Mastani

whom the Mogal commander Shahazat Khan had brought with him to beguile the tedium of the campaign. Mastani, when captured, tried to take poison. But Chimnaji prevented her and took her back with him to his elder Brother at Poona, who fell deeply in love with her. The acute Mastani saw the effect of her charms and refused to become the Peshwa's mistress unless he promised her to give an equal share in his estate to any son whom she might bear him. The minister would have bought her consent on any terms. He made the promise and kept it. And their son Samsher Bahadur became a wealthy and distinguished noble, only to fall on the battle-field at Panipat in 1760. To Mastani, Bajirao assigned a suite in his new Palace and the door which led to it is the door still called Mastani's gate.] In front of it is a Mussalman tomb believed by the public to be hers.

Nana Fadnavis afterwards called the gate "Ali Bahadur Darwaja" after Mastani's grandson who conquered Bundelkhand, and founded Banda State.

4. Khidki Darwaja—which was always closed and the entrance was open through a small window. This Darwaja is now known as "Kavathi" on account of a *Kavathi* tree grown near it.

5. Jambul Darwaja—owing to a *Jambul* tree.

Of the four fortified walls two measured 200 yards in length and 20 feet in height, two 150 yards of the same height. They contained in all nine bastions built of stone below and brick above, of which four are at the corners and five in the middle of the ramparts. Their names with the number of their guards are given below:—

1. Bastion Delhi Darwaja	...	20 soldiers.
2. Bastion Ali Bahadur Darwaja	...	10    ,,
3. Bastion Corner I	...	20    ,,
4. Bastion Dindi Darwaja	..	10    ,,
5. Bastion Khidki Darwaja	...	15    ,,
6. Bastion Corner II	...	10    ,,

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 7. Bastion Side Corner (?) of Ganesh Darwaja. | 15 soldiers.  |
| 8. Bastion North Corner of Ganesh Darwaja     | 25     ,,     |
| 9. Bastion Jambul Darwaja                     | ... 20     ,, |

Besides the above there were patrols at ten more points making the total on the rampart 275 men.

The Palace contained four large courts or *chouks* and several halls or state-rooms known as "Diwankhanas". They had taken their names from their decorations or other uses. The most important halls were as follows:—

1. Ganpati Rang-mahal—Hall of audience.
2. Nachacha Diwankhana—Dancing hall.
3. Arse Mahal—Hall of mirrors. Mirrors covered its ceiling, walls and floor. And the story runs that Bajirao the second offered two beautiful pieces of jewelry to two highly placed ladies of his Court on condition that they walked unrobed through the mirror hall to take them. The Prince promised to keep the matter a dead secret, and the ladies, tempted by the jewelry, agreed to the condition. One of them, ashamed to be seen in the garb of Eve, walked across the room to fetch the prize in the attitude of the Venus de Medici. The other, thinking of nothing but the jewel to be gained, walked as unconcerned as if she had been clad in ermine. The ladies received their reward. But the Prince did not keep the secret. The story became the property of the Poona public. And the court wits gave nicknames to each one of the two ladies. Kincaid, who tells the story, translates the nicknames as "Crouching Kate" and "Susan Straight".
4. Juna Arse Mahal—Old Hall of mirrors.
5. Dadasahebancha Diwankhana—Hall of Raghunathrao.
6. Thorlya Rayacha Diwankhana—Hall of the first Peshwa.
7. Narayan Ravacha Mahal—Where Narayanrao Peshwa was hacked to pieces by the swords of some guardsmen incited by the wicked aunt, Anandibai.
8. Hastidanti Mahal—Ivory hall.



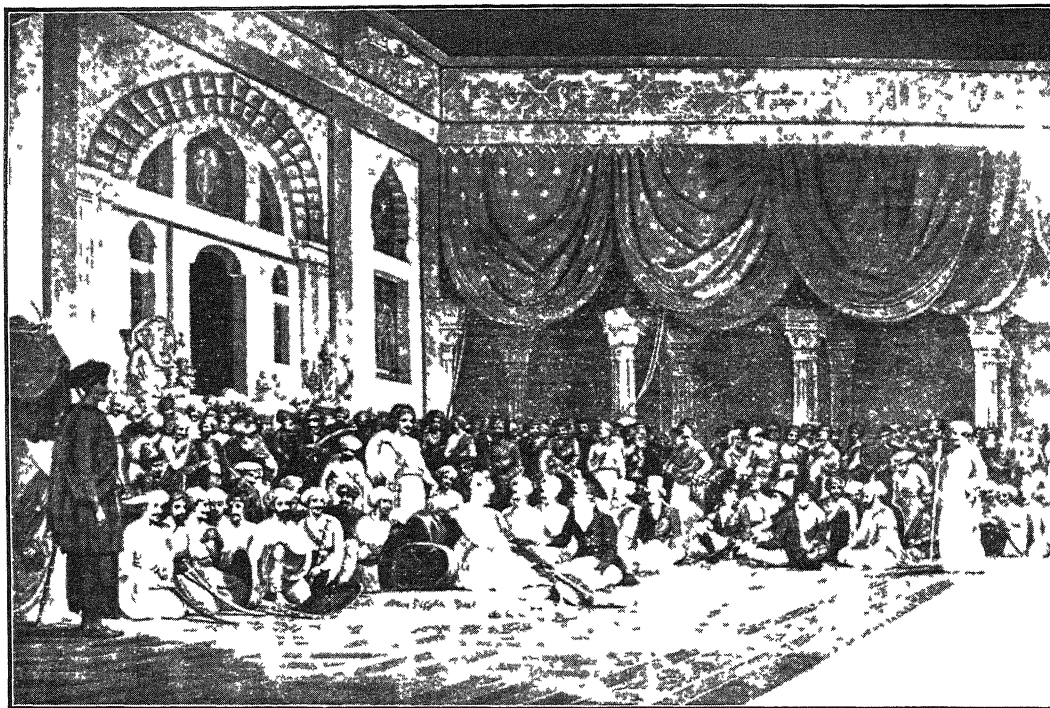
Besides these there were many other rooms and apartments assigned to different members of the royal family, and to several departments of the household such as the Treasury, Store room, Record room, Library, Jewellery room, Armoury room, Medicine room, etc., etc. The vast household was well regulated and controlled, separate officers being appointed for the supervision and management of the Palace. There were regular guards and patrols placed inside and outside of the Palace. As the records show, the staff at the Palace in 1779 contained the following:—

- 480 Royal Guards,
- 229 Purandar Guards,
- 325 Kanadi Infantry,
- 34 Attendants of Royal Stables,
- 82 Royal Cavalry-men,
- 224 Infantry men,
- 76 Attendants,
- 1,690 Shiledars and bargirs

Thus making up a total of 3,144. In addition to this there were 300 regular sowars or horse-soldiers in attendance night and day. This number afterwards rose to 500. Such was the strength of the Royal household of the Peshwas.

As regards the construction and style of the Diwankhanas or halls of this Palace, it may be said that they were generally of one pattern—“*Kalamdani*” meaning an oblong old inkstand fashion, one central hall with flat ceiling and small compartments with sloping ceiling on four sides. The ornamentation was generally of one pattern. The pillars supporting the main hall were beautifully carved out and shaped like cypress trees, and joined together on the top by engraved arches of exquisite workmanship. The ceilings were covered with beautiful wooden tracery in different designs and were painted with trees, creepers, flowers, or scenes from the great epics, the Mahabharat and the Ramayan. Bhojraj, a very skilful artist from Jaypur, was specially engaged for the work of painting these halls.





Sir Charles Malet handing to the Peshwa in Durbar, the English copy of the Triple Alliance Treaty between the East India Company, the Mahrattas and, Hyderabad, against Tipu Sultan of Mysore, concluded on the 1st of June, 1790

The main Diwankhana or the Durbar hall in this Palace was the Ganapati Rang-mahal. It was designed and built by Balaji Bajirao, the third Peshwa, for celebrating Ganapati Festival, in 1755. This historic hall was the scene of many political and social events and the famous picture of the Poona Durbar represents the remarkable assembly held here in 1790. Captain Moor who visited Poona when the Peshwa's power was at its height describes the splendour of this hall in the following words:— 1790

“He (the Peshwa) has a very magnificent room in his palace at Poona, called the Ganes room, in which, on particular festivals in honour of Ganes, he receives numerous visitors; I have seen more than a hundred dancing girls in it at one time. At one end, in a recess, is a fine gilt figure, I believe in marble, of this deity, and many other mythological decorations around it; the other end of the room, bounded by a narrow strip of water in which fountains play, is open to a garden of fragrant flowers, which, combined with the murmuring of the fountains, has a very pleasing effect. This room is well designed<sup>1</sup> in Mr. Daniel's fine picture of the Poona Durbar unrivalled perhaps in oriental grouping, character, and costume. This picture<sup>2</sup> was painted for Sir Charles Malet, from sketches by the late Mr. Wales; and the artist has chosen the time when Sir Charles, then our Ambassador at the Court of Poona, attended by his suite, delivered to His Highness the Peshwa, in full Durbar, the treaty of alliance, ratified by His Majesty, between Great Britain and His Highness and the Nizam of Hyderabad made, preparatory to the war between the triple allied powers and Tippoo, in 1790.”

Robert Mabon, a European artist, who helped Mr. Wales in preparing the sketches of the Poona Durbar and visited the Ganapati Mahal in his company about this period (1790-1795) has given a most graphic description of the Poona Durbar.

“During my stay at Poona”, writes Mr. Mabon, “I had the pleasure of being introduced to the durbar, or court of the

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1 Depicted.

2 The picture or a copy is now at Government House, Ganeshkhind,

Mahrattas. After waiting there some time, in conference with several Brahmins, attendants of the Peshwa, he made his appearance. I made a salam to him, which he gracefully returned, and advanced to the musnud or throne, on which he sat down, cross-legged, with attendants behind him, armed with swords; one of whom was his chowree-bardar, with a large chowree, or whisk, in his hand to keep off the flies. In front of the Peshwa stood his chopdar, with a long silver stick, ready to receive any orders he might be pleased to favour him with.

"I sat down at a distance in the attitude in which the Peshwa was, *viz*: cross-legged, as nothing is considered by him a greater piece of impoliteness than extending your legs, or sitting in any manner in which the soles of your feet might be pointed towards him. He was of a fair complexion and appeared to be about twenty-three years of age; his dress consisted of a long jama, or gown, of a very fine muslin; a string of very large pearls hung from his neck, a considerable way down his waist; a very fine red shawl, with a rich embroidered border, was thrown carelessly over his shoulders, wore a beautiful cluster of diamonds, the centre one of which was about an inch square, of a very fine water. On the top of his turban, he wore a small curvature of gold, about three inches high, richly set with emeralds and various precious stones<sup>1</sup>; over the right temple, from the top of the turban, hung several strings of pearls, which terminated at bottom by small red tassels. In this group, on the left, I was introduced to Nana Furanvase, his then Prime Minister, and formerly regent during the time the Peshwa was under age. It is to this sagacious politician, that almost all ascribe the present flourishing state of the Mahratta empire. His dress was much the same with that of the Peshwa, but not so splendid.

"The musnud, or throne, is raised from the ground about four inches, and consists simply of three pillows covered with dark green velvet, placed upon rich embroidered cloth, in the manner represented in the annexed sketch. Before the Peshwa, upon

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<sup>1</sup> See also the top of Malet's hat in the portrait on p. 16. This is the Shir Pett, emblem of official dignity worn by the Ministers and others.

this cloth is placed his *cuttar* (Katyar) or dagger, beautifully enamelled with various devices: next to it, a small urn and plate, made of copper, enamelled, and his goolab-danee for sprinkling rose-water, richly set with diamonds; close to them, his betelnut-box, which is truly splendid, it is set so full of diamonds, that at a little distance, it appears entirely composed of them: next to it is placed a silver cup, for his saliva, on a towel; and last of all, his sword and shield; the handle of the sword is green enamelled, full of diamonds; the scabbard is covered with red scarlet; the shield differs in no respect from the common Mahratta one, otherwise than that the five studs upon it, are gold; which, in that of a person of inferior rank, would be plated, or perhaps plain brass.

“After remaining some time with the Peshwa, betelnut was presented me, which according to their custom, is the signal to depart. I accordingly, after accepting of it, took my leave.”

The Ganapati Rang-mahal may be styled as the ‘Diwan-i-am’ of the Marathas, as it had seen many vicissitudes of fortune and witnessed many important events of great consequence. Here the great festival in honour of Ganpati was celebrated with *éclat* every year in the bright half of the month Bhadrapad which lasted for ten days. Here the Dasara Durbar was held annually on a very grand scale when all the sardars and military officers assembled to pay their homage to the Peshwa.

The great Peshwa, Balaji Bajirao, celebrated his glorious victories in the north and south of India in this very building. His son Madhavrao I tried to regain by his judicious and wise rule in this Palace the glories of the Marathas lost in the battle of Panipat. His brother and successor Narayanrao was cruelly murdered in a corner room of the main building. His posthumous son, Sawai Madhavrao, resided here nearly for twenty memorable years, while the administration was carried on under the sole guidance of the famous minister Nana Phadnawis. His brilliant Courts in the Ganpati Rang-mahal were thronged not only by Sardars and Chiefs from different parts of

1761-  
1772

1773

1774-  
1796

the Maratha Empire, but by representatives and envoys of European Nations and other Indian States. The marriage of the Peshwa was  
1782 celebrated here with great pomp in 1782 and the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Raja of Nagpur, the Raja of Satara and other Chiefs and Sardars from all parts of India attended the grand ceremony. The state entry of Sawai Madhavrao into Poona after the victory over the Nizam at  
1795 Kharda in 1795 was the last exhibition of Maratha glory and power, which passed away with the death of the young Peshwa by a fall from the first story of the Ganpati Mahal on a fountain in the same year.

It may be interesting to note that all the ambassadors and representatives of the foreign powers were received and political business was transacted with them in this very Durbar hall. It is stated in old records that two members of the Bombay Council, Thomas Byfeld and John Spencer, were received here by Balaji Bajirao in 1756 and given dresses of honour worth Rs. 1,224. Here Mr. Mostyn, Col. Upton, and many other English gentlemen were received with honour and were presented with rich dresses and ornaments. It is said that Mr. Mostyn was charmed with the fragrance of the Peshwa's rose-water and expressed a desire to have a bottle or two for his use, but to his surprise next day, orders were issued to supply him half a pound of best rose-water every day as long as he remained in Poona. The French representatives, M. Bussy and St. Lubin, were given audience in the same hall and received costly presents from the Peshwa.

Since the establishment of the British Residency in Poona in 1786 Sir Charles Malet and his suite were the constant visitors to the Durbar. They cultivated great friendship with the Marathas and kept up cordial relations with them.

This Hall as well as others were surrounded by beautiful rows of fountains that used to play here on festive occasions. It may be noted that in India it was the custom from ancient times to erect fountains and gardens in Royal Palaces for the sake of pleasure, art, and beauty, and the Mogul Palaces at Lahore, Delhi, and Agra are specially famous for their magnificent gardens and ornamental

fountains. The Moguls and Hindus like other Eastern nations were interested in art, and enjoyed beauty not for a selfish purpose, but for the religious and traditional ideas which they cherished most. The Peshwas, too, following the example of the Mogul princes adorned their palaces with beautiful gardens and water fountains, terraces, and pavilions. There are yet some traces of original fountains which confirm our belief that they were imitated from Mogul palaces in Northern India.

Besides a number of fountains and gardens for ornamental purposes, the Poona Palace had some special fountains constructed most artistically and ingeniously for the pleasure and joy of the boy Peshwa, Sawai Madhavrao. There was one celebrated fountain known as "Hazari Karanje" or thousand sprayed fountain in the western side of the main Palace which was an object of curiosity and wonder to the whole court. It had the shape of a lotus flower with a circumference of 80 feet and sixteen petals—each petal having sixteen spouts. It is said that in India there is not a single fountain like this anywhere having 196 jets, nor even in Europe, excepting the celebrated fountain "Fontana di Trevi" at Rome. The water of this great fountain played in a hundred patterns while the sun for its amusement would make and break a thousand rainbows. Like the Fountain of Diana at Versailles it was a favourite rendezvous of the Poona Durbar and the young Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao was an enthusiastic lover of this wonderful sight.

In the western side near the Ganpati Hall, there was another deep tank or well, built after the Mogul pattern, to exhibit shining waterfalls. The stone-chutes were so ingeniously cut that the water running over them was thrown down forcibly and broken into ripples and splashes. They were called "Chadars" meaning white shawls of water. Behind these transparent waterfalls a skilful arrangement was made to place coloured lights in the niches which gave a charmingly brilliant effect at night. The young Peshwa was very fond of these shows and used to invite his Royal guests to enjoy the delightful scene.

In this Palace the state rooms or Durbar Halls were lofty and well arranged, and contained very rich articles of furniture and tapestry.



The department of jewellery and the library contained choicest and rarest things. The picture gallery possessed most valuable masterpieces of the old Mogul and Persian arts, and also fine specimens of old masters in Europe, mostly presents from foreign nations such as the English, the French, and the Portuguese. The armoury was full of rare and curious arms, and the collection of arts and curios was placed in the Museum Hall known as *Jinnas Khana*. It contained chiefly foreign articles of art and mechanism including watches, clocks, globes, music boxes, and toys.

This brief account will give some real idea of the pomp and glory which this historic building once possessed in the zenith of the Peshwa's power. Among Marathi records there are no descriptions preserved of this Palace, but fortunately they have been recorded by a few European gentlemen who visited the Poona Durbar on diplomatic mission or out of curiosity. Their accounts place vividly before our eyes the old scenes of the Palace, and it is hoped that the following extracts will be found highly interesting.

The first among the later visitors was Major Price who visited Poona in 1791. He commanded a grenadier company in Captain Little's batallion and with it joined the Maratha army under the Brahmin General, Parashuram Bhow. He was present in the battle of Dharwar against Tipu Sultan in 1791, where he was severely wounded. On the surrender of Dharwar he proceeded to Poona where he remained attached to the military guard, or honorary escort, of Sir Charles Malet, first British Resident at the Peshwa's Court, until the Peace of Seringapatam. He visited the Peshwa's Palace on several occasions in company with Sir Charles Malet. He describes his visit on the

1791 7th April 1791 in the following terms:—

“The Resident, attended by the whole of his suite, European and native, and preceded by the escort of sepoys—about 80 in number—crossed the ford of the Moota; and proceeding through the middle of the crowded city, we came to the entrance of the Palace, which looks to the east.\* This leading through a lofty gateway we passed to the left, along a very ordinary colonnade,

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\* Ganesh Darwaja.

which appeared, indeed, as yet in an unfinished state; and at the 1791 termination of this, a sharp turn to the right, brought us at once into the Dewankhana or hall of audience. This was spacious and lofty, but perfectly simple, and without ornament, if we except the usual carving in the woodwork. The side towards the area—which as far as I recollect was to the north—was entirely open, the roof being sustained by wooden pillars; and the floor was covered, from end to end, with a spotless piece of white calico. The young Prince was seated on his regal cushion—or gaddy, his Minister, the veteran and intelligent Nana Furnoveis, on his right hand, and other functionaries, and military chiefs, forming a semicircle at the head, and one side, of the saloon.

“As we were, in conformity with prior arrangements, all in satin shoes and silk stockings, we advanced without interruption, being, of course, announced by numerous choubdaurs, or silver sticks, towards the Prince, who stood up to receive us; and having treated each of us, without exception, with the buggulguiry, or accolade—which was also done by the Minister—we all of us then seated ourselves, as best as we could, upon our hams—as much as possible concealing the soles of our shoes, which it would have been considered the extreme of indecorum to discover.

“The Resident, communicated with the Peshwa, through the Minister, in a manner which appeared most cordial and unreserved. And I cannot forget the splendid display of jewels which decorated the person of the young Prince; but more particularly a superb necklace, descending far down the breast, and consisting of alternate diamonds and emeralds each fully as large as a nut-meg, which must have been of inestimable value.”

Another distinguished visitor Lord Valentia, who paid a visit to Poona in 1803, has left an interesting account of it in his travels. 1803 About the Palace he writes:—

“On entering the Palace, we found His Highness’s cavalry and guard of infantry drawn out, with his elephants and suwarry.

1803

As we passed under the Nobit Khanah the kettle-drums beat. Within the walls the servants were all at their posts, and the crowd considerable. In the windows were numbers of the higher orders. We quitted our palanquins at the foot of the stairs, which we mounted, attended only by our Chobdars and Ausubadars. A small anti-room led to the durbar. At the door, I waited a few seconds, till I saw that the Dewan of the State, Sadaseeo Maunkesor, was sufficiently near; when, having quitted my slippers, I stepped on the white cloth with which the whole room was covered, Colonel Close supporting my left arm. I embraced the Dewan, and presented the officers of my suite. At this moment the Peshwa entered the room, and stepped on his guddi or throne.

"The Palace is a tolerable handsome building, and was very clean. The Durbar room is large; it is supported by wooden pillars handsomely carved. His guddi was of white muslin, richly embroidered in gold and coloured silk. His attendants stood round without the pillars, except a few with silver sticks. Holkar did not much injure the Palace, but he carried away everything moveable; a small armoury and the elephant haudahs did not escape."†

1805 Sir James Mackintosh, Recorder of the Bombay Court, paid a visit to the Peshwa in 1805. He describes the Palace in his journal as follows:—

"We went about half a mile, or somewhat less, through the city, of which the principal streets are paved with flags, and

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† Here is something that happened between the visits of Major Price and Lord Valentia. Think of it when you examine the Delhi Gate.

Tukoji Holkar, ruler of Indore, died in 1797. He left 2 sons and 2 bastards. The elder son was imbecile; the younger was murdered by Sindia of Gwalior who then occupied the country of Indore. The two illegitimate sons fled and became brigand commanders. Yeshwantrao defied all efforts to seize him, but Vithuji was defeated and taken.

The Peshwa Bajirao II sentenced the exiled Prince Vithuji to be dragged through the streets at an elephant's foot until he died. The Peshwa then seated himself in the Veranda of the drum room on the Delhi Gate to watch his wretched victim being dragged to his death through the gate below. Yeshwantrao Holkar, the victim's brother, never forgave the Peshwa; and when he had regained his Kingdom, he led his army to Poona in 1803, and expelled the Peshwa, who was only re-established in Poona by British arms under General Arthur Wellesley aged 33 (later the Duke). This is the visitation by Holkar to which Lord Valentia refers.

which is reckoned one of the best-built native towns in India. The word *Bhara* (*wada*?) which is the term for the Peshwa's house, ought not to be translated palace, because it is applied also to the houses of the other Mahratta Chiefs at Poona. From its size, it might well deserve the name; the front is about the length of Somerset House towards the Strand. We entered through a gate into a large square formed by the Palace. The walls all around were painted with scenes of Hindu mythology. At one of the corners of this rather handsome square, we had a staircase to climb, which formed a singular contrast to the exterior of the building; it was steeper than that which goes to the terrace at Parell,\* and not half so broad. At the top of this staircase was the entry of the hall of audience, where I left the splendidly embroidered slippers with which Colonel Close had furnished me. The hall was a long gallery, about the length perhaps of the verandah at Parell, but somewhat wider, supported by two rows of handsome wooden pillars, either of oak or of some timber exactly resembling it. (The width of which I speak is between the pillars.) Behind the pillars, on each side was a recess about half the breadth of the middle part. This apartment was carpeted, and near the end at which we entered was a white cloth laid, with three pillows: this was the Musnud, or throne."

From the above description it appears that Bajirao did not receive his illustrious guest in the Ganpati Mahal but in another hall, which is difficult to distinguish from others at this distance of time.

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\*The then Government House at Bombay; now the Haffkine Pathological Institute where Penicillin is grown.

## II. THE SANGAM OR THE BRITISH EMBASSY AT POONA, 1787 to 5 Nov., 1817

1787 THE Sangam at Poona, now known as the Judge's Bungalow, is a place of great historical interest. The meaning of the word Sungum is a confluence of two rivers.<sup>1</sup> This site Sir Charles Malet, the first British Resident, selected, and built on it a house in 1787, which afterwards attained a great importance in the political history of Poona. It is therefore necessary to give a short account of the place as well as its distinguished Residents.

James Douglas has justly observed in his Book of Bombay that the Malet family within a hundred years gave to diplomacy three individuals of note in direct succession. The first in this notable series was **Charles Warre Malet** who rose to the responsible position of the Resident at the Peshwa's Court at Poona in 1786. He came to India in 1770 and accepted a writership in the civil department under the East India Company. By his talents and activity he soon rose to distinction and was appointed Resident at Cambay in 1774. He then became Private Secretary to the Governor of Bombay and was appointed British Resident at Poona in 1786.

The treaty of Salbai in 1782 closed the first Maratha War and a permanent friendship was assured between the Marathas and the English; but the formidable activities of the rival powers such as the French, the Portuguese, Tipu Sultan of Mysore, and the Nizam of Hyderabad impressed upon the English the idea of keeping a permanent Resident at Poona. The English had on previous occasions sent envoys to Poona such as Captain Gordon, Major Price, Mr. Mostyn, Colonel Upton and others on diplomatic missions, but now they saw the necessity of having a permanent representative at Poona and solicited the permission of the Maratha Government for the purpose. After some hesitation and discussion Nana Phadnavis was compelled to accede to their request, and the acting Governor-General Mr. Macpherson at once selected Charles Warre Malet to take up that diplomatic and responsible position.

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<sup>1</sup> See plan, p. 88A, and footnote on p. 19.



**CHARLES MALET 1st. Baronet, created 1791.**

Charles Malet was descended from William Malet of Graville in Normandy, a companion of the Conqueror, whose exploits at the battle of Hastings are recounted by Wace in his Roman de Rou; who was Sheriff of York in 1068; & died in 1071.

Another ancestor was William Malet, Baron of Curry Mallet & Shepton Mallet in Somerset who served in Normandy under Richard Coeur de Lion in 1195, was Sheriff of Dorset & Somerset in 1211, & joined the Noble Barons to wrest Magna Carta from King John in 1215.



By the treaty of Salbai, Mahadji Sindia of Gwalior was considered to be the mutual guarantee for the perpetual and invariable adherence of both parties to the terms of the treaty and it was thus necessary to secure his consent to this new proposal. Malet therefore proceeded to Northern India to meet Mahadji Sindia. After a long and tedious journey he reached Muttra and met the Maratha intermediary on the 20th March 1785. Mahadji was naturally reluctant to accept such a proposal by which his own influence was to be shaken. Nevertheless Malet with the help of Mr. Anderson, the English envoy at Sindia's Court, succeeded in prevailing upon Mahadji to signify his assent to this proposal which had already been accepted by the Peshwa.

Thus having gained his object Malet proceeded to Calcutta to see the acting Governor-General Mr. Macpherson, who issued his orders appointing him British Resident at Poona. Malet, who had up to now been a subordinate of the Bombay Government was appointed as a representative of the Calcutta Government and was placed under their control and guidance. He was styled in all correspondence as *Vakil Nisbat Kalkattekar*, i.e., Envoy on behalf of the Calcutta Government.<sup>1</sup>

From Calcutta Malet went to Bombay in January 1786 and thence proceeded to Poona to take charge of the newly created Residency at Poona. Nana Phadnavis, the Chief Minister of the Poona Durbar [or Govt.] had gone South to the Carnatic on the expedition against Tipu. He therefore deputed Bahiro Raghunath Mehendale to receive the new Resident and to make suitable arrangements for him at Poona. Bahiro Raghunath, who was called "Bahiro Pandit" in the English correspondence, was a trusted officer of the Peshwa's Court, who acted as Nana's "vakil" (i.e. agent or plenipotentiary) with the Resident and discussed state matters on behalf of his master as long as Malet was at Poona. He possessed attractive manners and unusual tact and cultivated great friendship with the Resident.

Malet arrived in Poona on the 3rd March 1786 and was well received by Bahiro Raghunath on behalf of the Poona Court. He had

3 Mar.  
1786

<sup>1</sup> The Seat of the Governor General of British India was at Calcutta from Clive's time until it moved to Delhi in 1912. When in 1858, Queen Victoria took on the administration of British India from the Honourable East India Co., the "Governor General" became "Vice Roy" or Deputy Sovereign as well.



1786 a large retinue with him including six European officers. Of these three were entitled to the honour of being carried in palanquins. He had also 35 horses, 200 guards, 100 followers, 50 hamals and kamathis, 75 dooly bearers, 425 coolies, 2 elephants and 5 palanquins, besides one large tent, two small tents and three big rahutees and several small rahutees (servants' low tents).

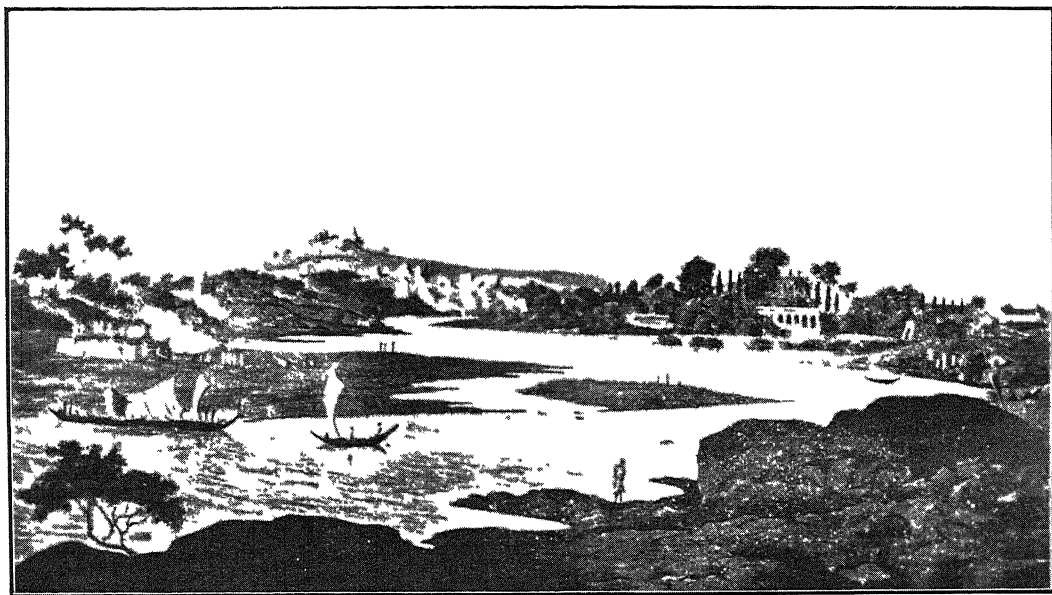
To accord with the state formalities and ceremonials, there was considerable discussion on the subject of Malet's reception; but it was decided that he should be treated by the Peshwa's Government with the same dignity and courtesy which were shown to former British ambassadors, Mr. Mostyn and Colonel Upton. Bahiropant reported full particulars of the reception to Nana Phadnavis. From his report it appears that Malet was received by the Peshwa's representative at Ganesh Khind [near Pashan] whence he was taken to the Gaikwad's<sup>1</sup> mansion which was selected for his residence. Malet stayed there with a few select persons of his suite, and the whole retinue was kept in a garden near Parvati [the temple-crowned hill overlooking the road from Khadakwasla into Poona City along the right bank of the Moota river]. He afterwards pitched his tents opposite Parvati near Anandrao Jivaji's garden and himself lived there for some time.

On his arrival in Poona, Malet wanted to pay a state visit to the Peshwa and offer him several presents which he had specially brought. Amongst them was a large griffin bird (presumably an ostrich) from Abyssinia, four feet high; but unfortunately it died in its cage below the Ghauts, and its body was brought to Poona. Malet obtained leave to see the Peshwa, but according to the old custom it was decided to give him the same reception which was given to the English ambassadors on former occasion. Malet was displeased with this decision. He contended that English envoys who had visited Poona in the past represented the Bombay Provincial Government, while he had now come on behalf of the Calcutta Government and he ought to be received with the same honours and presented with an elephant as was done by the Mogul Emperor or Mahadji Sindia. After some

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<sup>1</sup> See key to Maratha Chiefs with Map I.





Poona in 1800 :— The view up the Mootha river from the British Residency. Poona City is in the left centre, under the temple-crowned Parvati Hill (from which the Peshwa watched the Battle of Kirkee through an English Telescope).

unpleasant discussion Malet was accorded an interview by the Peshwa and the question of presenting an elephant was altogether dropped.

In 1786 Malet made his permanent residence at Poona and requested the Peshwa to allot him a piece of ground for building a bungalow for himself and his staff outside the town. He selected the picturesque site near the Sangam<sup>1</sup> which was afterwards approved and sanctioned by the Peshwa's Government. It appears that a plot of ground was given to Malet near Bibi Saidani's Darga or shrine near the Sangam, and the first house that was built there for the Residency was on the spot where Judge's Office is situated at present. This place Malet soon developed into a splendid park<sup>1</sup> with a beautiful building in the centre. He lived in the rich style that befitted his position, and entertained the Peshwa and his courtiers at his house. Captain Moor describes his residence in 1791 in the following terms:—

“The residence of Sir Charles Malet is known by the name of the Sungum, being situated, as the word denotes, at the confluence of two rivers the Moota and the Moola.....

“Sir Charles' former residence was in the city, but not being a pleasant situation, he was permitted to build habitations on this spot, which until that time had no buildings of any kind, save an old neglected pagoda in ruins, still remaining in the gardens, a contrast to the neatness of the buildings erected at a great expense by him, and the gentlemen of his suite. The Sungum is a little town quite detached from the city, being divided from it by the Moota, and inhabited entirely by the gentlemen, their attendants, and two companies of sepoys, stationed here as the resident's honorary guard. Sir Charles' garden is watered by both rivers, by means of aqueducts: it produces all the fruits and vegetables of this country; here is an excellent vineyard; apple and peach trees thrive well, and promise to be a great acquisition to the horticulture of these parts. Stately

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1 The road from Aundh and Pashan into Poona Cantonments passes through the former park just before crossing the Moota river beside the Railway Bridge. Peering under the Railway Bridge from the road one can see the Moota flowing into the Moola at right angles. The “*Sangam*” is another name for this *confluence*. The Residency occupied the left hand corner piece of land as one looks downstream from the Bridge.

cypress and other ornamental trees, contribute to make this a charming retreat, and we readily declare, that with the advantages of society and situation, the Sungum is the most enviable residence we ever saw in India.

Sir Charles' stud is elegant, consisting of forty or fifty noble animals from Arabia, Persia, &c. Several elephants on state visits compose part of the retinue. This show is requisite at Eastern Courts, where there is always considerable pomp, and it is necessary for ambassadors to assume an appearance of ceremonious dignity."

Malet having settled at Poona rendered valuable diplomatic services to the East India Company. In those days Tipu in Mysore had become very powerful and his progress was dreaded by the Marathas as well as the English. It was therefore thought necessary to crush his constantly growing strength by leading a joint expedition against him. Malet succeeded in negotiating a triple alliance between the Marathas, the English and the Nizam. He exhibited great diplomatic genius and tact in bringing about this important treaty, which was signed by the Peshwa in the Ganpati Rang-mahal on the 1st June 1790.

By this agreement the armies of the three great powers combined together and led a successful expedition against Tipu. Lord Cornwallis commanded the English army, while Secunderjah, the son of the Nizam, and his Minister, Mir Alam, commanded the Nizam's forces; and Parshuram Bhao Patwardhan and Haripant Phadke were at the head of the Maratha armies. All these allied forces invaded Tipu and conquered and divided amongst the three powers half of his country.<sup>1</sup> The political services rendered by Malet in this respect were highly appreciated by the British Government who created him a Baronet on 24th February 1791.

Sir Charles Malet was a very popular person in Poona society. He not only promoted his nation's political and commercial interests but also introduced European arts, science, and medicine into Maratha

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<sup>1</sup> Another, and this time final, allied war against Tipu became necessary nine years later, because Lord Wellesley felt obliged to stop Tipu from intriguing with Buonaparte. The result can be seen by comparing the size of Mysore shown in Map I, p. a with Map II, p. 48. The war proved final because Tipu was killed in action, defending his capital, the island fortress of Seringapatam.

society. The contact and influence of such an accomplished and amiable person proved beneficial in many ways. It was Malet who introduced the famous artist Mr. James Wales to the Peshwa's Court who sketched several important personages in Poona. Wales came to Poona in 1790 and lived there till his death in 1795. His portraits of the Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao, Nana Phadnavis and Mahadji Sindia are still in existence.<sup>1</sup> Malet induced the Peshwa to establish a school of drawing in his palace and the artist Wales was selected to be the superintendent in charge of the school. He taught several Indian pupils amongst whom Gangaram Tambat became very proficient. He made drawings of the Ellora or Verul caves, which were presented to Sir John Shore, the Governor-General, in 1794.

Drs. Crusoe and Findlay, the Residency Surgeons, contributed to the spread of English medical treatment and many persons of rank and distinction took English medicines prescribed by these skilful doctors regardless of any religious scruples.

Sir Charles Malet and his friends presented several telescopes, globes and many other appliances of English science to the Peshwa who was exceedingly charmed with them. It is on record that Dr. Findlay gave lessons to the Peshwa in astronomy and geography and received handsome rewards from him.

The interest of Malet's career at Poona lay more in the social relations which he cultivated with all the people in Poona from the Peshwa down to the lowest clerk, and his success was mainly due to his intimate knowledge of oriental manners and customs, and his genial good nature and free intercourse with the people. He regularly attended Ganpati festivals in the Peshwa's palace and at the houses of several noblemen, and was always present at their marriage and thread ceremonies. In fact, he endeared himself to every one in Poona and became a great social success.

Malet was still present in Poona in 1795. He was extremely sorry at the sad death of the Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao and wrote to Nana

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1 At Government House, Ganeshkhind.

Phadnavis a touching letter of condolence. When Bajirao II succeeded to the Gadi, Malet became an equally great friend of the new Peshwa.

Malet's intimate relations with the Maratha Court disclosed to him the faults and weaknesses of the Maratha people and their government. When he accompanied the Maratha armies in their expedition against the Nizam in 1795, he saw the utter want of discipline in them and observed in one of his dispatches that such a disorganized army could be vanquished in no time by a small but well disciplined force. I need not mention how this prophesy came true.

Sir Charles Malet was a keen observer of men and things and had selected the best men for his service. Syed Nuruddin Hussein Khan was his diplomatic agent in the Poona Durbar and used to assist him in his political business. This gentleman was a great Persian scholar and was highly spoken of by Major Price:—"He (Sir Charles Malet) had in his suite a Mogul Khan or Nobleman, once high in station in the Court of Delhi, and of the very highest attainments in Persian literature; several of the sons of this nobleman were also in Sir Charles' suite. He had, in particular, been the friend and associate of the celebrated Gazhi-ud-din, celebrated perhaps, as much for his crimes as for his abilities as a statesman. From his habits of constant personal communication with this old nobleman Sir Charles Malet had become the most practical Persian scholar I have ever met." It is a well-known fact that Sir Charles was a great Persian scholar and that he had collected an excellent Persian library of most valuable illuminated manuscripts which he afterwards presented to the Royal Asiatic Society of London.

It is interesting to note that Sir Charles Malet visited the Mahableshwar Hills in November 1791 in company with the Peshwa, and justly claims the credit of being the first European discoverer of that charming place. Sir Charles left the Poona Residency in 1796 and was promoted to the membership of the Council in Bombay where he acted as Governor for some time. He kept his friendly relations with the Peshwa's Court and had a regular correspondence with the Peshwa and Nana Phadnavis. He did not remain long in Bombay. Having put in arduous and meritorious service for 27 years he retired

and left for England in March 1797. Before leaving the Indian shores 1797 for good, he paid his last visit to Poona on the 21st February 1797, when the Peshwa Bajirao presented him with a farewell dress of honour, and sent with him a friendly letter and costly presents to the King of England.

Lady Malet was Susan, the daughter of the artist, Wales. By her he had eight sons; the eldest, Sir Alexander Malet, succeeded to his father's title, and was English Ambassador at Berlin from 1856 to 1866. Another son, Sir Arthur Malet, was a member at the Bombay Council, and the third son, Mr. Hugh Malet, was a Bombay Civilian, who, while Collector at Thana, discovered the Matheran Hills. Sir Charles Malet died at Wilbury House in 1815. He was figuratively called the "Maker of Sangam" meaning the connecting link of the East and the West.

After Sir Charles Malet left the Poona Residency, his Assistant Mr. Uthoff, a man of practical common sense, acted as Resident for some time.

In 1798 **Lt.-Col. William Palmer** came to Poona and took 1798-1801 charge of the Poona Residency. He had served in various capacities in Bengal and had become famous in diplomatic circles. He was Military Secretary to Warren Hastings for several years and became Resident of Lucknow in 1782. On account of his high merits and political knowledge he was specially selected as Resident to Mahadji Sindia's Court (Gwalior) where he earned a considerable reputation and also gained a deep insight into Maratha affairs. From Sindia's Court he was transferred to the Poona Residency where he served from 1798 to 1801—a period full of trouble and confusion. He calmly watched the events that took place in the Poona Court and strictly followed the policy of non-intervention. His despatches are very wise and sober. He was a great admirer of Nana Phadnavis and was present in Poona when that renowned Statesman died in 1800. While reporting his death to Government he remarked in his despatch, that "*With Nana departed all the Wisdom and Moderation of the Maratha Government.*" In 1801 Sir Barry Close was appointed



1801 Resident at Poona and Col. Palmer was sent on Military duty. He afterwards commanded at Monghyr and died at Burhampur, May 20, 1814.

1801-1810 **Sir Barry Close**, the third Resident at Poona, entered the army in 1772, and the following year joined one of the battalions of the Indian European Regiment, and served with the corps throughout the early Mysore wars. After filling many high and important situations he became Adjutant-General of the Madras Army, and as such performed most distinguished services in the last war against Tipu Sultan and was present at the siege and capture of Seringapatam in 1799. He was subsequently appointed by the Marquis Wellesley on account of his eminent talents and integrity, as well as his knowledge of the language, manners and customs of the natives, Resident at Mysore. In 1800 the Hon'ble Court of Directors, in testimony of their high sense of his services, presented him with a sword worth three hundred guineas. He rendered most valuable services in establishing peace and good Government at Mysore, and his memory was perpetuated there by calling a village after his name "Close Peth" which is still a flourishing town in the Mysore State. He was appointed Resident at Poona in 1801 and held that office till 1810.

1802 While at Poona he negotiated the famous treaty of Bassein with the last Peshwa Bajirao on the 31st December 1802. He was a consummate politician and a sober thinker, and those who saw and knew him have expressed a high opinion of him. Sir James 1808 Mackintosh who met him in Poona in 1808, writes:—"I am as much struck as I was at first by the character of Colonel Close. He is without accomplishment of show, plain, cautious and with a degree of mildness, that forms a singular contrast with the firmness, and even sternness which he has shown on trying occasions. He has a calm understanding, wholly employed in practice, united to a strength of a nerve, which qualifies him equally for a cautious and vigorous policy. He is a very superior man, who might easily pass among common observers for a very common man." When he died Mr. Mountstuart

Elphinstone wrote in one of his letters:—"I doubt whether such an assembly of manly virtues remains behind him. A strong, erect and hardy frame, a clear head and vigorous understanding, fixed principles, unshaken courage, contempt for pomp and pleasure, entire devotion to the public service, formed the character of Sir Barry Close—a character one would rather think imagined in ancient Rome, than met with in our age and nation."

Colonel Close kept up friendly relations with the Poona Durbar and observed oriental etiquette and manners. In his time the Poona Residency was charming place. "His gardens" wrote Lord Valentia, "are on the banks of the Moota where it joins the Moola, and forms the Moota-Moola river. It is a charming spot adorned with cypress and fruit trees. At the point a very handsome bungalow is erected, where breakfast and dinner were served; at one end is a billiard table for the idlers. The Colonel keeps a very excellent table; beef, however, out of respect to the prejudices of the natives is never used. Holkar when here, had so little control over the Pathan troops, that the sacred animal was frequently slaughtered." The large house or the bungalow which was built at the Residency owed its existence to Colonel Close who, with the help of the Peshwa Bajirao, got it erected in 1804 in commemoration of the Maratha war [wherein British forces had restored his realm to the fugitive Bajirao]. Colonel Close retired in 1810 and went to England, when the Government of Mādras expressed their appreciation of his eminent and distinguished services. He died in 1813. The Court of Directors sent to India a splendid monument to his memory in 1818, which was erected in St. Mary's Church, Fort St. George, Madras. .

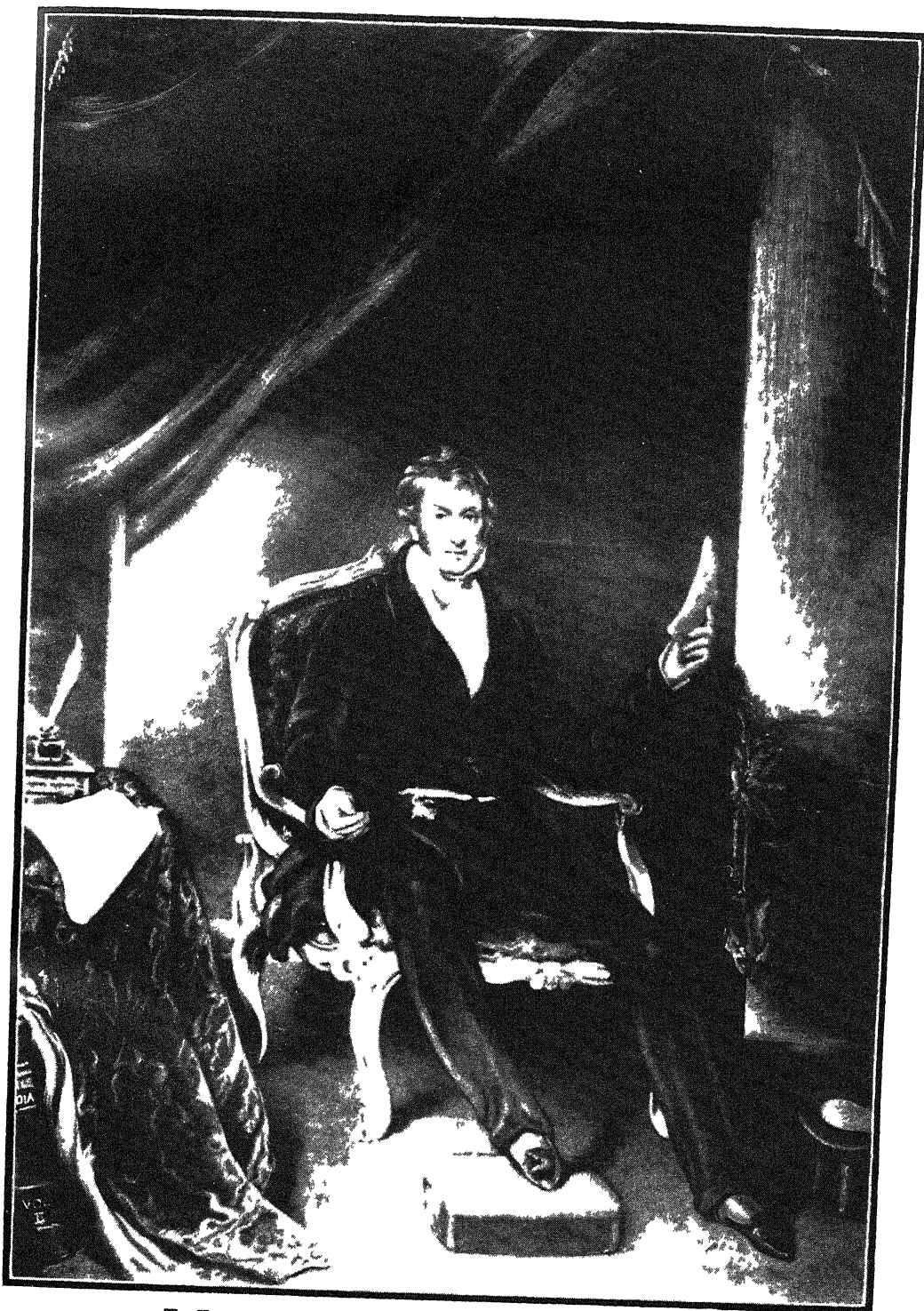
**Mr. Elphinstone**, who was in 1801 an assistant to Sir Barry Close, succeeded him at the Poona Residency in 1810. His life is full of varied interest but it is not possible here to give it in detail. At an early age he entered the service of the East India Company and after serving in various capacities he came to Poona in 1801. At the time the Peshwa Bajirao was on the throne and the Maratha confederacy had greatly declined. Hostilities arose between its chief members, Sindia

1802 and Holkar. The British declared war against Sindia and his friend the Raja of Nagpur. General Wellesley took the field in person and young Elphinstone was attached to his staff. At the battle of Assaye, 23rd September 1803, Elphinstone was by the General's side and his letters contain an animated picture of the action. By the treaty of Surji Anjangaon peace was concluded with the Marathas and on the recommendation of General Wellesley, Elphinstone was appointed in 1804 to the important post of the Resident at Nagpur, which he held till 1808. Wellesley paid a high compliment to Elphinstone for his conspicuous services and merits in the campaign, and remarked in one of his despatches that he (Elphinstone) had mistaken his profession and ought to have been a soldier! In 1808 Elphinstone was appointed Ambassador to the Afghan Court of Cabul, with a view to establish English influence there. On his return from the Cabul mission he was appointed Resident at Poona in 1810.

The signal services of Elphinstone at Poona are conspicuous in history. The Peshwa Bajirao was a weak and vicious ruler<sup>1</sup> and was under evil influence after the death of Nana Phadnavis. In 1816 he connived at the murder of Gangadhar Shastri, the envoy from Baroda<sup>a</sup>, which made Elphinstone interfere. He demanded the dismissal of Trimbakji, a favourite of the Peshwa, who was said to be real culprit. The Peshwa shuffled and a political struggle commenced between the Poona Durbar and the English. Elphinstone suspected the fidelity of the Peshwa and demanded a new treaty which the Peshwa signed on 13th June 1817; but he continued to intrigue against British Government and increase his forces. The storm soon broke. The Peshwa began to hem in the Residency and Elphinstone ordered up reinforcement for its defence. The Peshwa's army attacked the Residency on the 5th November 1817. Elphinstone was already aware of the danger and a few hours previous to the attack he evacuated the Residency and retired to the camp at Kirkee. The Marathas fell upon the abandoned Residency which was burned with all that it

1 Bear in mind that this is written by Rao Bahadur Parasnis, a patriotic Maratha Historian.

2 As Baroda was in a sense under British protection, so was its Diplomatic Envoy.



The Honourable MOUNTSTUART ELPHINSTONE Son of 11th Lord Elphinstone.



contained, including Elphinstone's beloved books and the whole of his private property. About sunset the English army under Col. Burr gallantly fought with the Maratha forces and utterly routed them. In this battle the Peshwa's Second-in-Command, Moro Dikshit, fell, and the Peshwa himself ran away. The city was captured by the English and the British Flag was hoisted on the Peshwa's Palace.

5 Nov.  
1817

The battle of Kirkee gave a death blow to the Maratha power, and events that followed it completed the annexation of the Peshwa's territories. Elphinstone took charge of the conquered country and devoted all his talents and energy in establishing tranquillity and peace and in organizing a civil government. Though the task was most arduous and difficult, Elphinstone achieved it with wonderful success. He left his mark as a wise, just and generous administrator and his illustrious name is still held in reverence and honour in the Deccan. In 1819 he was raised to the Governorship of Bombay, where he earned great success and popularity. He retired in 1827 and died on the 20th November 1859 at Hoodhook, his residence in Scotland.

The Sangam or the Residency was very much improved by Elphinstone. It included the adjoining grounds of the present Science College and the English Burial Ground close to the Sangam Lodge. The Resident's Quarters contained five bungalows and many outhouses for the bodyguards and sentries. The present building is an altogether modern structure built on the ruins of the old Residency. It still possesses a peculiar interest on account of its historical association and picturesque scenery and is included in the list of ancient monuments of Poona.

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### III. URULI

#### THE EXPERIENCES OF CORNETS HUNTER & MORRISON IN THE UNSETTLED CONDITIONS OF 1817

1817        IN 1817 Cornets\* Hunter and Morrison, two English officers on the Madras establishment, on their way from Haidarabad to Poona with a small escort, were caught at Uruli, a small village eighteen miles east of Poona. On being waylaid the two officers, whose escort consisted of one havaldar and twelve sepoys, took post in a rest-house and made a breastwork of their baggage. They defended themselves with courage for several hours and did not surrender till their ammunition was spent and the enemy had climbed to the top of the building and was firing on them through holes in the roof. It is worthy of mention, that, though before the attack the officers were offered a safe conduct to the British camp at Poona, they declined to avail themselves of an advantage which was not open to their men.

From Uruli the two officers were taken as prisoners to Poona.

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\* A Cornet is a 2nd Lieutenant in the Cavalry.

1818        Bombay Courier, 16th May 1818. In a general order by the Commander-in-Chief, dated Sunday, 11th January 1818, the capture of these two officers is thus alluded to: "This occurrence, while it evinces what may be done, even with a handful disciplined troops, over a numerous irregular enemy, shows also the injury the public service may suffer at any critical moment by a failure of ammunition. His Excellency embraces this opportunity to order that no guard shall in future be detached from its corps on any service beyond the frontier without its full amount of spare ammunition, the want of which in the instance above described has forced two brave young officers to surrender in a situation where perhaps they might have maintained themselves until relieved. The loss of the enemy was more than four times the original number of this small party and the Commander-in-Chief desires that his approbation may be expressed to the sepoys who have survived. He has also to express his hope that Cornets Hunter and Morrison may, at no distant date, be restored to liberty and the service, an object which His Excellency will not fail to endeavour by every means to accomplish." Madras Government Gazette quoted in the Bombay Courier of 16th May 1818.

#### IV. 5 NOV., 1817: THE BATTLE OF KIRKEE

FOR more than a year the relations between the British Government and the Peshwa had been strained. In July 1816, the murder of Gangadhar Shastri, the Gaikwar's agent, when under British special protection, the favour shown by the Peshwa to Trimbakji Denglia, Gangadhar's murderer, the Peshwa's failure, in spite of ample means, to provide his contingent of troops, and his intrigues with Sindia, Holkar, the Raja of Nagpur, and the Pendharies, determined the Marquis of Hastings, then Governor-General, to make such an agreement with the Peshwa as would prevent him from defeating the object of the treaty of Bassein (Dec. 31, 1802). 1816  
July

In April 1817, before concluding any agreement, the Governor-General insisted that the Peshwa should promise to give up Trimbakji Denglia. For weeks the Peshwa evaded the Resident's demand, till, on the 8th of May, Poona was surrounded by British troops. Then, 1817  
8th May under the influence of MORO DIKSHIT, one of his Brahman advisers, who strongly opposed a breach with the English, the Peshwa issued a proclamation offering a reward for the capture of Trimbakji Denglia, and as a security for his good faith, handed to the British the hill-forts of Purandhar, Sinhgad, and Rajgad.

The new treaty was then considered, and, in June, after long discussion, the Peshwa agreed to the terms which had been drawn up by Mr. Elphinstone according to the Governor-General's instructions. Under this treaty the Peshwa admitted that Trimbakji was Gangadhar's murderer, and promised to show him no favour and to do his best to have him seized and handed to the British. He engaged to have no dealings with any courts except through the British Resident, and, instead of the contingent of troops which he had always failed to furnish, he undertook to make over to the British,

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This account is chiefly compiled from Grant Duff's *Marathas*, 634-635, 643, 654; *Pendhari and Maratha War Papers*, 119-128, and *Blacker's Maratha War Memoir*, 64-69. Since the account was written, Mr. Elphinstone's description of the battle with a map has been published in Sir T. E. Colebrooke's *life*, 1, 382-386.



1817 lands yielding revenue enough to support a force of 5,000 cavalry, 3,000 infantry and a due proportion of ordnance. This treaty, which is known as the treaty of Poona, was concluded on the 13th of June 1817. 18th June In accordance with the treaty, after a slight delay the Peshwa's share of Gujarat, the North Konkan, the fort of Ahmadnagar, and the territories of Dharwar and Kushgal, were made over to the British, the strength of the Peshwa's cavalry was reduced, and, except a battalion about 500 strong kept in the Peshwa's pay, the brigade which had been raised by the Peshwa in 1813 and drilled and officered by Englishmen was placed under British control and called the Poona Auxiliary Force.<sup>1</sup>

July In July the Peshwa went on a pilgrimage to Pandharpur; and from Pandharpur to Mahuli, the sacred meeting of the Yenna and the Krishna near Satara. At Mahuli he was visited by Sir John Malcolm, the Governor-General's Agent for the Deccan. The Peshwa complained of the harshness of the recent treaty. At the same time he professed so warm a regard for the British, and so fully admitted his dependence on British support, that Sir John Malcolm was satisfied that, whatever his feeling might be, interest would force him to remain friendly. He advised the Peshwa to show his goodwill to the English by joining with them in putting down the Pendharis.

Nothing, Bajirav declared, would give him more pleasure than to take part in this work, and, with this object, Sir John Malcolm allowed him to enlist troops. Mr. Elphinstone had no faith in Bajirav's promises, and, by the help of two friends, Yashvantrav Ghorpade (a Maratha) and Balajipant Natu (a Brahman), was kept informed of Bajirav's plans. Bapu GOKHALE was made chief minister and nearly a million sterling was given him to ensure the support of the Maratha chiefs and nobles. Bhils and Ramoshis were enlisted and special missions were sent to Nagpur and to the camps of Holkar and Sindia.

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1. This brigade was chiefly composed of men from the Company's districts in Hindustan. On entering the battalion the men took an oath of faithfulness to the Peshwa, but, of their own accord, they added the proviso so long as the Peshwa continues in alliance with the British Government.

On the 5th of September the Governor-General, informed by Mr. Elphinstone of the Peshwa's designs, wrote to the Directors: "We cannot rely on the fidelity of the Peshwa except when it is ensured by the immediate sense of our power. The persevering perfidy of his attempts, after the most solemn assurances of contrition for the past, and of scrupulous good faith for the future, forbid any reliance on him."<sup>1</sup>

On his return to Poona, at the end of September, the Peshwa continued to push on his preparations for war. His army was strengthened, his forts were repaired, stored and garrisoned, and orders were issued to make ready his fleet. Of two parts of the scheme the Peshwa took personal charge, the Resident's murder and the bribery of the British troops. Gokhale opposed Mr. Elphinstone's murder and the attempt was put off till the arrival of Trimbakji Denglia and his Bhils. Great efforts were made to shake the loyalty of the British Sepoys. The families of some whose homes were in Ratnagiri were seized and their destruction was threatened unless the men came over to the Peshwa. Large sums were spent in bribery. One native officer was offered £1,000 (Rs. 10,000) and £5,000 (Rs. 50,000) were advanced to an agent in the hope that he might corrupt some of the British officers.

At their last meeting on the 14th October, the Peshwa complained to Mr. Elphinstone of his loss of power. He still professed friendship for the British and promised to send his troops against the Pendharies, as soon as the Dasara was over. On Dasara day, 19th October, Bajirav held a great review. He treated the Resident with marked discourtesy, and during the review allowed a body of horse to dash down on the British force as if to attack it. After the Dasara, instead of sending his troops against the Pendharies, he kept increasing their strength by summoning fresh parties from all sides.

Mr. Elphinstone was satisfied that the Peshwa would attack him before many days were over. Messages were sent to hurry on the European regiment on its march from Bombay, and to General Smith,

1. Pendhari and Maratha War Papers, 114, 115.

1817 who was at Ahmadnagar, to keep a force ready at Sirur. Besides Mr. Elphinstone's escort of two companies of Bengal Native Infantry at the Residency and the Peshwa's battalion<sup>1</sup> of the Poona Auxiliary Force under Major FORD at DAPODI, the British force consisted of about 1,200 men of the Sixth and Seventh Regiments of Native Infantry<sup>2</sup> and two guns under the command of Colonel BURR, who were camped at Garpir on the right bank of the Mutha river. This position, which is near the Collector's office close to the northern outskirts of Poona City, had been chosen in 1803 by General Wellesley to guard the town. It was well suited for guarding the town, but, with an unfriendly force in the city, the position was far from safe. High-hedged gardens coming close to the lines gave assailants an easy approach and the disaffected a safe escape. (Dapodi also spelt Dapuri.)

Unfold  
plan on  
p. 38A

25th Oct. On the 25th and two following days bodies of horse camped round the British lines, a strong corps of Gosavis (Arabs?) took a position on the Wanooree uplands to the east, and the Vinchurkar's horse with some infantry and guns posted themselves to the west between the Residency and Bhamburda village. The Maratha commanders were eager for an immediate attack. On the night of the 28th their guns were yoked, their horses saddled, and their infantry ready to advance. But the Peshwa wavered, and the night passed in consultation.

28th Oct.

29th Oct.

Next day (29th) Mr. Elphinstone sent to the Peshwa complaining that his troops were pressing on the British lines and asking him to order them to withdraw. The message caused great excitement. GOKHALE was for instant attack. But again the Peshwa was undecided. The work of winning over the British troops was not yet completed, and every day was adding to the Maratha strength. Another night passed in consultation and next afternoon. A forced march of about thirty miles brought the European regiment into the Garpir cantonment.

30th Oct.

1st Nov.

On the first of November, leaving a company to guard Garpir and 250 men to strengthen the Resident's escort, Colonel BURR's force,

1 The details were: about 500 infantry, a few cavalry, and three six-pounder guns.

2 The details were: second battalion, 1st Regt. Native Infantry; second battalion VI Regt. Native Infantry and first battalion VII Regt. Native Infantry.

about 800 European Infantry and 1,200 Native Infantry with six guns,<sup>1</sup> crossed the Mutha to the Residency and marched 3 miles North to Kirkee. North of Poona, across the Mutha river, with the Bhamburda hills on the South-West<sup>2</sup> and the Mula winding along the North and East, stretches a slightly rolling plain. Except a belt arable land on the left bank of the Mutha and a fringe of watered and fenced gardens along the right bank of the Mula, the plain is bare and open. Beyond the end of the Bhamburda hills a low ridge stretching North-East rises slightly to the village of Kirkee, driving the Mula north in a deep bend that half surrounds the village. The camp<sup>3</sup> was pitched in the low land to the east of the village, the left resting on Holkar's Bridge and the right on the rise of Kirkee village, the site of the Powder Magazine. This rising ground commands the plain, which, with one or two slight dips and rises, falls south to the line of the old Poona-Bombay road. Behind the road to the right stretch the Bhamburda or Ganeshkhind hills, and, to the left, beyond the Mutha valley, rise the sharp temple-crowned peak of Parvati and the distant Sinhgad hills. About a mile and a half west of the Kirkee camp, on the left bank of the Mula, lay DAPODI, the head-quarters of Major FORD's battalion; about a mile to the east was Holkar's Bridge; and nearly three miles to the south, along the right bank of the Mula, lay the Residency with a garrison of about 400 men. The straight road from Kirkee to the Residency passed along the right bank of the river, but there was a second path over Holkar's Bridge along the left bank of the Mula and across a ford just behind the Residency. (See plan p. 38A.)

1st  
Nov.

On the 1st and 2nd of November Colonel BURR prepared a post at Kirkee for his stores and munition; and Mr. Elphinstone examined the ground near Kirkee, fixed a ford for the passage of the Dapodi guns, and *impressed on the commanding officers that if matters came to a crisis, the two British detachments should march out, join, and attack*

1st  
&  
2nd  
Nov.

1 The details were: The Bombay European Regiment, two battalions 1 Regiment N. I., two battalions VI Regiment N. I. and one battalion VII Regiment N. I. Of the six guns two were iron twelve-pounders, the four were apparently six-pounders. See Blacker's Maratha War Memoir, 64.

2 See plan p. 38A.

1817  
1st  
&  
2nd  
Nov.

the Marathas. The withdrawal of the British from Garpir to Kirkee greatly encouraged the Marathas. Garpir was plundered; Lieutenant Shaw, an officer of the Bombay army, on his way to Bombay was attacked, wounded, and robbed in open day by one of Bajirav's personal followers; the ministers spoke of the British with contempt, British officers were insulted, and Maratha troops pushed forward close to the Residency.

Mr. Elphinstone warned the Peshwa that if they advanced further the Maratha troops would be treated as enemies, and ordered the light battalion and auxiliary horse at Sirur to march into Poona.

On hearing that the Sirur troops had been sent for, the Peshwa determined to wait no longer. He ordered the Residency to be destroyed and all the British killed, except Dr. Coats, whose medical skill had once saved his life, and Major FORD, the commandant of the subsidiary force, if he agreed to stand neutral. MORO DIKSHIT, who was attached to Major Ford, visited him and tried to persuade him to remain neutral. But Major Ford refused to desert his countrymen, and withdrew from Poona to his camp at Dapuri.

5th.  
Nov.

On the morning of the 5th, the din of preparation rose from the city, the Maratha troops drew closer to the Residency, and a battalion took ground between it and the company which had been left at Garpir. Mr. Elphinstone sent a message to the Peshwa calling on him to keep to his promise and lead his troops against the Pendharis.

14.00  
hrs.

About two in the afternoon one Vithoji Naik Gaikwar came from the Peshwa. He told Mr. Elphinstone that his master had heard that the Resident had sent for reinforcements, that he feared that, as had happened in June, Poona would again be surrounded by British troops, and that if Mr. Elphinstone did not send away the European regiment, reduce the strength of the native brigade, and move the cantonment to a place to be named by him, the Peshwa would leave the city. Mr. Elphinstone replied that the Peshwa had no right to demand and that he had no power to order the British troops to be moved. Vithoji Naik complained and threatened and left warning Mr. Elphinstone that if he did not do as the Peshwa wished evil would come.

As soon as Vithoji left, Mr. Elphinstone called in the guard from Garpir, and sent Mr. Grant, afterwards Captain Grant Duff, along the ridge that stretches west to Bhamburda to watch what went on in Poona. Infantry were gathering on the slopes of the Bhamburda hills, and filling the space between the Residency and Ganeshkhind, and south towards the city, where it was not covered with corn, the lowland was full of horsemen. On Vithoji's return Bajirav was seen to withdraw to Parvati.

5th.  
Nov.

For an hour the city was still.

Then, about three o'clock, in spite of the ill-omened breaking of the staff of the Golden Streamer,<sup>1</sup> Bajirav, satisfied of the Goddess Parvati's favour, gave the order to attack. The masses of troops in front of the town began to move, and with the trampling and neighing of horses, the rush of riders, and the rumble of gun wheels, endless streams of horsemen poured from every outlet of the town. From the fields between the city and the Residency, scared by the uproar, antelopes bounded away, husbandmen fled, and bullocks broke from their yokes and galloped off. The moving wall of horsemen, with a roar like that of the Cambay tide, sweeping all before it, crushed the hedges and the standing corn, and, laying every barrier low, filled the valley from the river to the hills.

15.00  
hrs.

To defend the Residency against such a host was hopeless. Messengers were sent to Colonel BURR at KIRKEE and to Captain FORD at DAPURI directing them to move out, join their troops, and advance to meet the Marathas. Mr. Elphinstone and his escort of about 500 men forded the Mula behind the Residency, and, passing along the left bank of the river, crossed again by Holkar's bridge. They had hardly left the Residency when the Marathas dashed into the enclosure, tore up the trees, and setting fire to the buildings, burnt them to ashes, destroying Mr. Elphinstone's books and papers and everything he had except the clothes on his back.

At Kirkee, Colonel BURR, leaving his camp standing and sending part of the second battalion of the Sixth Regiment and two twelve-pounder iron guns to guard the post at Kirkee, marched about a mile

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<sup>1</sup> Equivalent to the Royal Standard.

1817  
5th.  
Nov.

towards Poona. Here he was joined by the Resident with his guard The Bombay European Regiment, the Resident's escort, and a detachment of the second battalion of the Sixth Regiment were placed in the centre; the first battalion of the Seventh Regiment with two guns on the left; and the second battalion of the First Regiment with two guns on the right. It was now about four o'clock, and after a short pause, as Major FORD's force was seen drawing near, Colonel BURR advanced to the attack.

16.00  
hrs.

The Marathas held a strong position about a mile and a half in front of the British. On the Maratha Left the Vinchurkar's and MOROpant's horse with the GOLDEN STREAMER held the base of the hill in front of GANESHKHIND; a line of infantry and fourteen guns filled the Centre; and on their Right towards the Residency lay a large body of infantry and cavalry, their front strengthened by a rivulet and walled gardens. Behind, back to the bank of the Mutha, the plain was full of horsemen line after line as far as the eye could see.

As the British advanced, the fire of their right infantry caused much loss among the Maratha skirmishers and damped the Marathas' spirit as they had believed that the British sepoys would not fight. At Parvati the faint-hearted Peshwa, seeing the ready advance of the British, lost courage, and sent word to GOKHALE that he was not to fire the first gun. Gokhale, as he was riding up and down the ranks chiding and cheering his men, caught sight of the Peshwa's messenger, and, knowing what message he was likely to bring, opened a battery of nine guns, moved a strong corps of rocket camels to his right, and pushed forward heavy masses of cavalry, which, advancing at speed, swept over the plain nearly surrounding the small body of British troops. Major FORD was still about 1,000 yards to the west of the British line, when MORO DIKSHIT and one of the Rastias, at the head of a large body of horse, eager to show that the Peshwa's suspicions of their loyalty were unfounded, charged Ford's battalion. Ford threw back his right wing, and, waiting till the enemy were close at hand, met them with so deadly a fire that, with the loss of their leader MOROpant, they wheeled to the left and passing on were finally scattered by the heavy iron guns posted at Kirkee. (See left side of Plan.)

5th  
Nov.

When FORD joined the main line two guns were moved from the Right to the Centre and the light company of the Seventh Regiment was sent to the Rear to keep off the Maratha horse. Meanwhile, on the Left, 3,000 trained Arabs and Gosavis, under a Portuguese named De Pinto<sup>1</sup>, passing from the Centre of the Maratha line along the enclosures and watered land near the Mula, reached the open plain, apparently near the ruined water-channel behind Rose Hill house, and formed in front of the first battalion of the seventh and the second battalion of the Sixth Regiments. At sight of their red coats and colours the English sepoys pushed forward, and, in their eagerness to close, broke from the line.

GOKHALE saw the disorder, and, raising the Golden Streamer [Standard], followed by several of his highest officers and a picked body of 6,000 horse, charged from the Right along the British line. Seeing the danger Colonel BURR took his post with the Colours of the Seventh, a regiment he had formed and led for years, stopped the pursuit of De Pinto's battalion, and called on his men to keep their fire and show themselves worthy of his training. As he passed along the line, GOKHALE's horse was wounded and he was forced to retire. Other officers took his place and they were dashing into the broken British line, when, close in front, the foremost horses floundered in a deep morass, and rolling over disordered the ranks behind and offered an easy aim to the British fire. About 300 horsemen struggled through the morass and attacked the British flank, but were forced to retire before some companies of Europeans who pushed on to support the Seventh Regiment.<sup>2</sup>

As the British line advanced, the Maratha Centre and Left withdrew, driving off their guns. The strong body of infantry on their right, sheltered by the stream bed and garden enclosures, for a time galled the British Left. But skirmishers were thrown forward and they were

1 According to some accounts the Portuguese tomb to the north of Garden Reach marks De Pinto's grave. This seems to be a mistake as De Pinto is mentioned (Pendhari and Maratha Wars, 129) after the battle of Kirkee as taking charge of Hunter and Morrison, two English cornets, who were captured by the Marathas on the Bombay road. See Pages 28 and 45.

2. The account in the text, perhaps, explains the apparent discrepancy between Grant Duff's 6,000 Maratha horse (653) and Blacker's (Maratha War Memoir, 65) 800 resolute Marathas. Neither side knew of this morass. It was probably due to the very heavy late rains. Grant Duff's Marathas, 653.



1817  
5th  
Nov.  
  
20.00  
hrs.

forced to give way. The English now held the Maratha position, and as night was falling and the enemy were broken and scattered, pursuit was stayed and the British troops returned, Colonel Burr's brigade to Kirkee and Major Ford's to Dapuri, reaching their camps about eight at night.

The British loss was eighty-six killed and wounded, fifty of whom were sepoys and one, Lieutenant Falconer, a European officer.<sup>1</sup> Of the Marathas 500, including the minister Moro Dikshit, were killed and wounded

Two thousand eight hundred infantry, several of them disaffected and only 800 of them Europeans, broken into two bodies, almost without cavalry, and with only seven six-pounder and two twelve-pounder guns, in an open plain covered by the enemy's horse, had marched against and scattered an army of 20,000 cavalry and 8,000 infantry armed with fourteen guns.<sup>2</sup>

Of the British troops, the Marathas of Major Ford's subsidiary force deserted, and part of his newly raised horse were allowed to withdraw. But, of the regular sepoys, in spite of the Peshwa's bribes and threats, not one left the British colours. Colonel Burr, the commanding officer, though crippled by paralysis, laid his plans with wise care and in the thickest of the fight remained firm and cool.<sup>3</sup> The victory was mainly due to Mr. Elphinstone who had secured the presence of the European regiment, freed the troops from the dangers of their former camp, planned the meeting of the two divisions of the force, insisted on an advance in spite of the openness of the plain and the cloud of Maratha horse, and throughout the day inspired the troops by his brilliant gallantry.

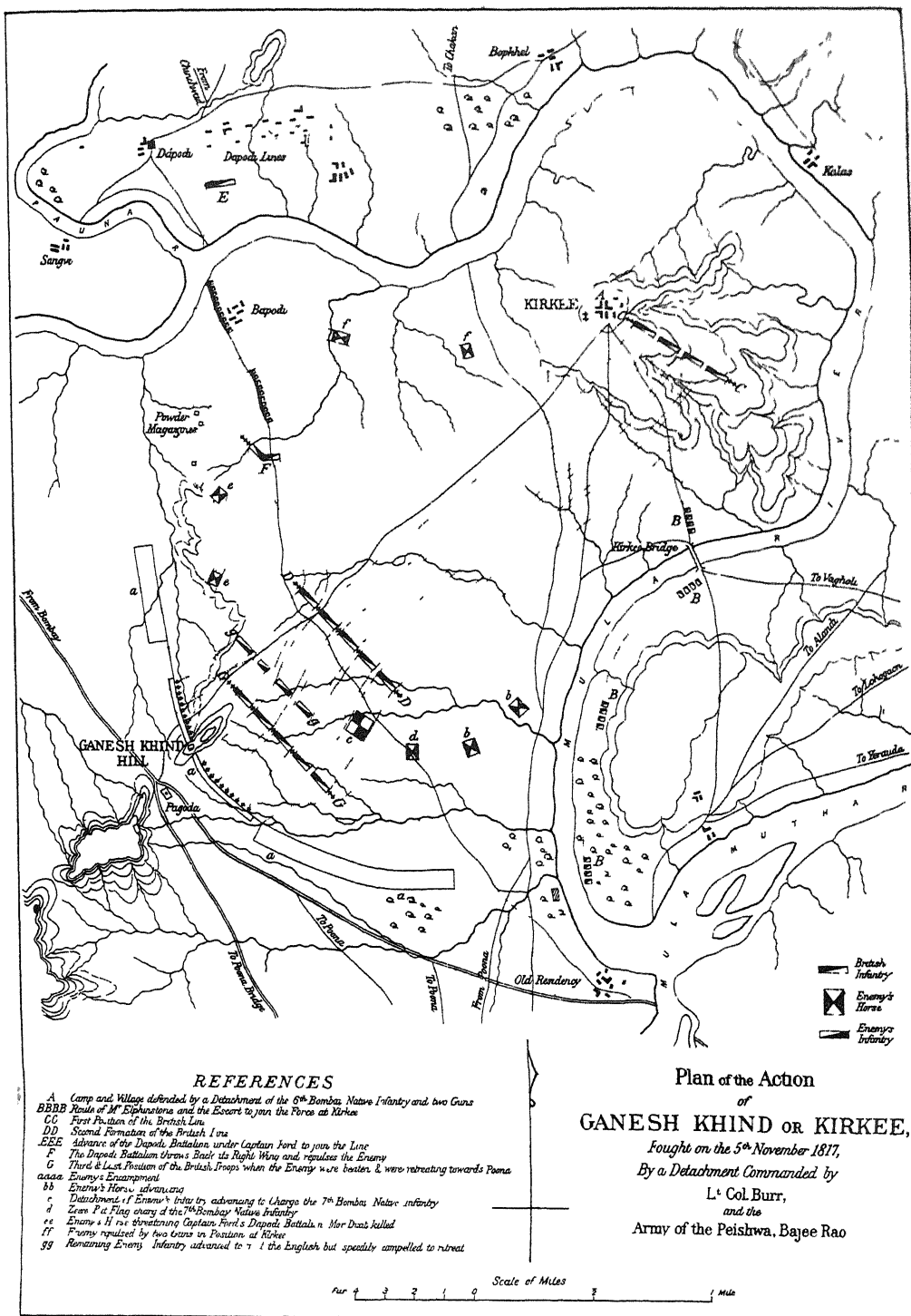
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1. The details are: Artillery, two laskars wounded: Bombay European Regiment, one private killed, one wounded; second battalion First European Regiment, one private killed, one Lieutenant (Falconer) died of his wounds, one havaldar, one naik, one waterman, five privates wounded; second battalion VI. Native Infantry, killed four privates, wounded ten privates; first battalion VII, Native Infantry, killed one havaldar, one naik, one drummer, nine privates; wounded one havaldar, three naiks, thirty-four privates. Major Ford's Battalion, killed one private; wounded one jamadar one havaldar, five privates. Colonel Burr, Penahari and Maratha War Papers, 125.

2. Besides this force, the Peshwa had 5,000 horse and 2,000 foot at Parvati. Grant Duff's Marathas, 654, note 1.

3. Two of Colonel Burr's attendants were shot by his side, a ball grazed his horse's head and another went through his hat. Grant Duff's Marathas, 653, note 2.





Garpr is in the bottom Right Hand corner, where the symbols for "British Infantry" etc. are printed

## V. NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1818: STAUNTON'S FIGHT AT KOREGAON

When the Peshwa decided to attack the British at Kirkee (5th November 1817) the situation, favourable to him, was as follows:—Fifty thousand British Indian troops were locked up in Central India. General Smith with the Division, usually stationed near Poona, had recently marched to join them. The Courts of Scindia, Holkar and Bhonsle of Nagpur were bitterly hostile to the growing power of the Company, and a single victory would certainly have brought them to unity with Bajirao to destroy it.

However, at Kirkee the vacillating Peshwa had failed to overwhelm, or even to keep separated, the two tiny British forces whose combined strength numbered less than one-tenth of his host. After the fall of Poona he withdrew with his army to the Junnar hills 45 miles to the North. General Smith had turned back and was in pursuit of the Peshwa; but the Peshwa eluded him and advanced on Poona wishing once again to try the fortune of war with his recent enemy Colonel Burr. The latter had lost in the battle of Kirkee 86 men, a serious loss from his small garrison; he, therefore, sent for help to Sirur (38 miles north-east of Poona).<sup>1</sup>

THE second battalion of the first regiment, Bombay Native Infantry of 500 rank and file under Captain Francis Staunton, accompanied by 300 irregular horse and two six-pounder guns manned by twenty-four European Madras artillerymen under a sergeant and a Lieutenant, left Sirur for Poona at eight in the evening of the 31st of December.

31st  
Dec.  
20.00  
hrs.

The Peshwa moving South was in a position to intercept this detachment where the road from Sirur to Poona crosses the BHIMA river. His great object was to be able to claim the defeat of British force no matter what its size or composition; and here at his mercy in the open was a victim weaker even than Colonel Burr.

After marching all night, a distance of twenty-five miles, about ten in the morning, from the high ground behind Talegaon Dhamdhare, Captain Staunton's men saw across the BHIMA the Peshwa's army of 25,000 Maratha horse. Tremendous issues were at stake and any weakness on Captain Staunton's part would have had shattering repercussions throughout India where all was tensely poised. Captain

1st  
Jan.  
1818  
10.00  
hrs.

---

1. Kincaid *Istur Phakde*.

1818  
Jan.

Staunton at once grasped the situation, and marched on as if to ford the river, then turned, and took the village of KOREGAON, which was surrounded by a mud wall of no great strength<sup>1</sup>. The buildings and river bank would greatly reduce the effect of the foe's superior cavalry. Captain Staunton secured a strong position for his guns, see *s* and *a* on the plan opposite and awaited on the enemy's attack.

As soon as the Maratha horse saw the British they recalled a body of 5,000 infantry which was some distance ahead. When the infantry arrived, three parties, each of 600 choice Arabs, Gosavis and regular infantry, under cover of the river bank and supported by two guns, advanced to storm the East end of the village on three points. A continued shower of rockets set on fire many of the houses. The village was surrounded by horse and foot and the storming party broke down the wall in several places and forced their way in and secured a strong square enclosure from which they could not be dislodged.

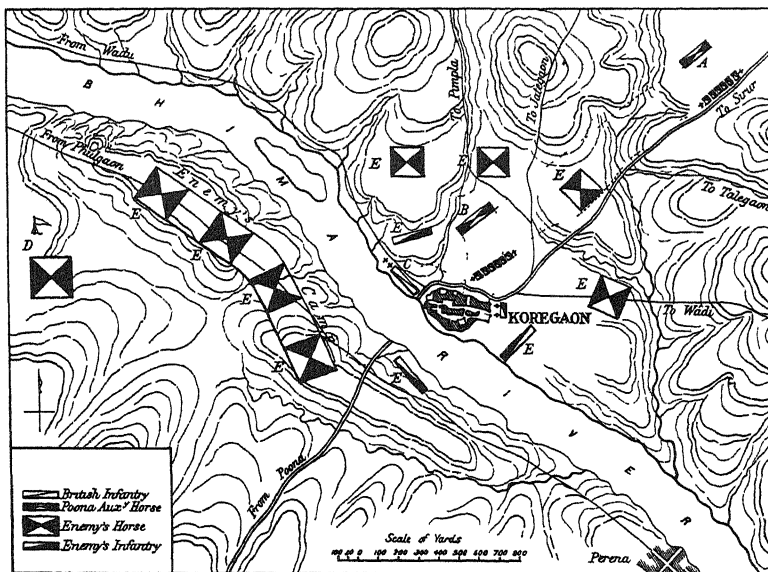
Though the village stood on the river bank, the besiegers cut them off from water. Wearied with their night's march, without food and without water, under a burning sun, a handful of men held an open village against an army. Every foot was disputed, several streets and houses were taken and retaken, but more than half the European officers being wounded, the Arabs made themselves masters of a small temple *s*, where three of the officers were lying wounded. Assistant Surgeon Wingate, one of their number, got up, and went out, but was immediately stabbed by Arabs and his body mangled. Lieutenant Swanston, who had two severe wounds, advised his remaining companions to suffer the Arabs to rifle them, which they did but without further violence. In the meantime, a party of the battalion under Lieutenant Jones and Assistant Surgeon Wyllie, came to the rescue, retook the temple and carried their companions to a place of greater safety.

Thirst drove the besieged nearly frantic and some of the gunners, all of whom fought with glorious bravery, thinking resistance hopeless, begged for surrender. Captain Staunton would not hear of yielding.

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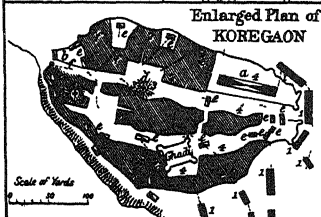
1. Grant Duff (*Marathas*, 656) describes the wall as full of large breaches on the river side and completely open on the east. This was its state at the end of the siege.





#### REFERENCES FOR THE PLAN OF THE TOWN

- a Position occupied by the Auxiliary Horse dismounted
- b A strong enclosure in which the followers & Baggage sought refuge
- c Gun commanding the right bank of the River
- d Gun commanding the Road from Surur
- eee The Battalion dispersed through the Village in small parties neglecting to occupy the Small Ghadi
- 111 Attack of the Arabs who dislodged the British parties, occupied the Ghadi & established themselves at 2222
- 333 Advanced Positions of the Enemy having Captured one Gun and the Wounded Officers and Men but which were subsequently retaken
- 444 Position to which the Enemy retired at 6 O'Clock, when they found their attacks unavailing & their numbers diminished
- fff Position retired to by the Battalion at the same hour to secure their Wounded and maintain their defence with more ease during the night. The Guns were likewise retired one being placed to rake the main Street & the other to defend the enclosure b



Plan of the Defence of  
**KOREGAON,**  
 On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1818,  
 By a Detachment Commanded by  
 Captain Staunton  
 In Presence of the  
 Army of the Peshwa

#### REFERENCES FOR THE GENERAL PLAN

- A Detachment on march when it first discovers the Enemy
- B Auxiliary Horse formed to hold in check the first body of Enemy's Horse which crossed the River whilst the Battalion marches to
- C A Position on the bank of the River where it opened its Guns on bodies of Horse at the opposite side
- D Peshwa's Position during the Attack of Koregaon
- EEE Peshwa's Army surrounding Koregaon

The gunners were still dissatisfied when their officer, Lieutenant Chisholm, happened to be killed and the enemy encouraged by his death rushed on one of the guns and took it<sup>3</sup>. Lt. PATTINSON; Adjutant of the Bn. of Native Infantry, a man six feet seven inches in height, of giant strength and heroic courage, was lying mortally wounded, shot through the body. Hearing that the gun was taken he called on the Grenadiers once more to follow him, and, seizing a musket by the muzzle, rushed into the thick of the Arabs and felled them right and left till a second ball through the body disabled him. He was nobly seconded, the gun was retaken, and dragged out of a heap of dead Arabs. Lieutenant Chisholm's body was found with the head cut off. "This is the fate," cried Captain Staunton, "of all who fall dead or alive into Maratha hands." The gunners took the lesson to heart and fought on with unflinching courage, and the defence did not slacken though only three officers, Captain Staunton, Lieutenant Jones, and Assistant Surgeon Wyllie, remained fit for duty. Towards evening their case seemed hopeless.

1818.  
1st  
Jan.

As night fell the attack lightened and they got water. By nine the firing ceased and the Marathas left.

21.00  
hrs.

Captain Staunton, whose mission had been to strengthen Colonel Burr's garrison at Poona, had been faced that morning after a night march of 25 miles with a situation which looked hopeless from the start; yet, by his invincible resolution and the devotion of his men, he had himself driven off the Peshwa's total force, so that Colonel Burr was never again attacked.

The effect upon the Peshwa's morale and that of his army can be imagined. They had failed to overwhelm a force of fellow Indians (half of whom were despised Mahars or "untouchables") whom they outnumbered by nearly 40 to 1, but who were led by 6 British officers assisted by 2 surgeons.

Just 6 months later the Peshwa surrendered. The spirit of his army never recovered from its failure to destroy Staunton's battalion, and though surprised by General Smith at Ashta and beaten by General Munro at Sholapur, its real victors were that gallant band,



who, for 12 hours without food or water, held against the full military strength of the Peshwa's kingdom, the crumbling walls of Koregaon.

Of the 834 defenders of Koregaon 275 were killed, wounded and missing, of whom were twenty of the twenty-six gunners.<sup>1</sup> The Marathas lost between 500 and 600 killed and wounded. In reward for the defence of Koregaon which General Sir T. Hislop described as "one of the most heroic and brilliant achievements ever recorded on the annals of the Army" the second battalion of the First Regiment was made Grenadiers as the first battalion had been made for the defence of Mangalur. The motto of the regiment became Mangalur and Koregaon.<sup>2</sup> Captain Staunton was appointed an honorary aide-de-camp to the Governor-General and presented by the Court of Directors with a sword ornamented with a suitable inscription and a sum of 500 guineas. On attaining the rank of Major in 1823 Captain Staunton was appointed a Companion of the Most Honourable the Military Order of the Bath.<sup>3</sup>

**3 Jan.** Mr. Elphinstone, who visited Koregaon two days after the fight (3rd January 1818), found every sign of violence and havoc. The houses were burnt and scattered with accoutrements and broken arms, and the streets were filled with the bodies of dead men and horses. The men were mostly Arabs and must have attacked most resolutely to have fallen in such numbers. Some wounded were treated with the same care as the British wounded. About fifty bodies within the village and half a dozen without, with the wounded and the dead, made not less than 300. About fifty bodies of sepoys and eleven Europeans, besides the officers, were found imperfectly buried.<sup>4</sup>

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1. The details are: Second battalion First Regiment. 500 rank and file and five officers, Captain Staunton; Lieutenant Pattinson killed, Lieutenant Conellan wounded, Lieutenant Jones, Assistant Surgeon Wingate, killed. Artillery, twenty-four men and two officers: Lieutenant Chisholm killed and Assistant Surgeon Wyllie. Auxiliary Horse 300 men and one officer: Lieutenant Swanson wounded. Grant Duff's Marathas, 658, footnote 2.

2. Grant Duff's Marathas, 658, footnote 1.

3. The sword was presented to Captain Staunton on the 1st of January 1820 by the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone. Five years later Lieutenant Colonel Staunton, C. B., died on the 25th of June 1825 off the Cape of Good Hope. Historical Record, 2nd Grenadier Regiment, 19-34, 39.

4. Colebrooke's Elphinstone II, 16-17.

At<sup>1</sup> the eminence near the river is a round stone tomb, where the artillerymen killed in the action were buried.

At this point the river is crossed, and 300 yards to the left of the Poona road on the opposite bank is an obelisk 65 feet high of which 25 feet is pediment 12'-8" square. It stands on a stone platform 32'-4" square. The obelisk is of polished hard stone, and is enclosed with a stone wall six feet high on three sides, and an iron railing with a handsome iron gate and two lamps on the west side. The inscription on the north and south sides is in Marathi; and the inscription on the west side given below is in English. The inscription on the north and east sides gives the names of the English killed and wounded, and of four natives attached to the artillery who were killed, from which it appears that of the eight officers engaged three were killed and two wounded, and of the twenty English artillerymen eleven were killed. The English inscription on the west side is:

[See page 44 for the inscription.]

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1. Murray's Bombay Handbook, 304-305. Compare Jacquemont, *Voyage dans l'Inde*, III, 544.

## THIS COLUMN

*is erected to commemorate the defence of Coregaum  
by a Detachment commanded by Captain  
Staunton of the Bombay Establishment  
which was surrounded on the 1st of January 1818  
by the Peshwa's whole army under his  
personal command,  
and withstood throughout the day a series of  
the most obstinate  
and sanguinary assaults of his best troops.  
Captain Staunton,  
under the most appalling circumstances,  
persevered in his desperate resistance,  
and, seconded by the unconquerable spirit of  
his Detachment,  
at length achieved the signal discomfiture of  
the Enemy  
and accomplished one of the proudest  
triumphs  
of the British Army in the East.*

## TO PERPETUATE

*• The Memory of the brave troops  
to whose heroic firmness and devotion it owes  
the glory of that day,  
the British Government  
has directed the names of their Corps and of  
the killed and wounded  
to be inscribed on this monument*

MDCCCXXII<sup>1</sup>


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<sup>1</sup> 1822 Compare Chesson and Woodhall's *Bombay Miscellany*, VII, 46-48.

## VI. CORNETS HUNTER AND MORRISON MEANWHILE

had stated in a letter, dated 9th November 1817 (four days after the Battle of Kirkee) that, though rather roughly used at first, they had been well treated since their arrival at Poona. Between December and January they were carried on cots from Poona to Kangori Fort about eleven miles south-east of Mahad in Kolaba. At first they were offered *nachni* bread but refused it. They were then offered rice and refused it also, when they were allowed wheat bread and a fowl a day.

Some time after they were observed coming down the hill on foot under a strong guard. When they had reached the bottom, they were put into litters, and carried to a fort about eight miles from Kangori, probably on the way to Vasota Fort forty miles south-east of Satara. At Vasota the Commandant fed them well, but so close was their confinement, that, till a shell burst over the roof of their prison during the British siege of the fort in April 1818, they had no idea that the English were near, nor till the Commandant had decided to surrender, did they know the name of the fort in which they were confined. Before the British took possession, the two officers were allowed to show themselves on the walls, and were greeted by the Europeans of the mortar battery with three cheers.

## EPILOGUE

### THE GLORY DEPARTED: THE PALACE AS A B. M. H.

Lt.-Colonel Fitzclarence who visited Poona on the 31st January 1818, one month after the battle of Koregaon, when the Peshwa Bajirao had already left Poona and the Palace was occupied by the British and turned into a Military Hospital, writes:—

“The old Palace is surrounded with a wall and circular bastions, having an open space in its front. The walls of an inner court are daubed with the Hindoo mythology, elephants, and horsemen.

“I found Mr. Coates in a deep verandah in one of the small courts, crowded with trees and shrubs, and he was so good as to shew us round the Palace. The great quadrangle is more handsome than that at Nagpoor, has sculptured wood pillars and cornices, which are very splendid, and the whole Palace is glazed throughout. A very fine room, with dark coloured wooden pillars, and carpeted with red cloth stuffed with cotton, displayed a full length picture of the Marquis Wellesley, which had been found neglected in a small adjacent apartment; and near the likeness of this great Statesman was a miniature of Sir Barry Close, also found in the Palace, let into the wall in the plaster. There were also two very large well-fashioned globes, with the names in the Latin language, and also the.....of silver. These, it was supposed, had been a present from the King of England to a former Peshwa, previous to the year 1788. From the top of the Palace I had a most extensive view of the city, camp, mango groves, the ruins of the Sungum, and holy hill of Parbutty<sup>1</sup>, to the south-east of the city. Poona, not having any suburb like Nagpoor, is inferior in population, and covers less ground.

“We now proceeded to the holy chamber, dedicated to a deity who could boast of an elephant's head and trunk. The room is vaulted and about fifty feet along, and very high, with a gallery which runs round it, like our music galleries in ball-rooms. It is

one mass of mirrors, intermixed with green foil, inlaid with gilt wooden partitions and numbers of English cut-glass chandeliers. To the fete in the honour of this tutelary divinity, the Resident was always invited, and the Peshwa did not himself do the honours, as he was also a visitor to his long-nosed patron. I saw here an English clock which was found going well, in the Palace; several large English books of fine engravings, and the remains of a very large orrery nearly destroyed. There was, besides, a native map, but I imagine Goklah must have a better one, to have so long escaped our pursuing army."

This was perhaps the last description of the Palace that had been written while the building existed intact.

Nine years after the Peshwa's surrender the whole Palace was completely burnt down by a great fire on the 27th February 1827<sup>1</sup>, which lasted for seven days, and except the heavy rampart, strong gateways, and buried foundations and ruins that still bear witness to the rise and fall of a mighty Empire, nothing of this majestic and magnificent building has been saved from the cruel hand of Time. It is only the Nagarkhana or music gallery on the top of the Delhi gate which once sang loudly the glories of the great Peshwas, which is now seen mourning in silence<sup>2</sup>.

When on 3rd June 1818 the Peshwa surrendered to Sir John Malcolm all his sovereign rights and he received in return a pension of £ 80,000 a year with leave to retain his crown jewels and a vast suite of Officials, Attendants and Priests, of whom many received further allowances from the British, varying from Rs. 6,000 to a few rupees a month. Bajirao II was allowed to choose his own place of residence. He chose Bithur on the Ganges near Cawnpore. A beautiful site about six miles in circumference was assigned for his residence; and its boundaries were marked by sixteen stone pillars. The Company deputed a Special Resident to his court.

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<sup>1</sup> 1827 was the year that Sir John Malcolm succeeded Mountstuart Elphinstone as Governor to Bombay. And the latter on retiring refused the Governor-Generalship which was then offered of him.

<sup>2</sup> Parasnis.

The Resident was Captain John Lowe, curiously enough a namesake of Napoleon's guardian at St. Helena, General Sir Hudson Lowe. Napoleon would have found little solace in the pleasures of Bithur: but it is probable that ample means, luxurious lodging and abundant female society were all that was needed to complete the Brahmin Ruler's happiness. In Poona he had, no doubt, possessed them; but here the exile could exchange smiles with his dancing girls and jests with his court wits without the haunting fear that in the course of the next few minutes Mountstuart Elphinstone or General Wellesley might pray for an interview. Elephants and horses covered with gold lace and jewelled trappings were daily paraded past his door; and some eight thousand guardsmen, armed with every kind of useless weapon, recalled to Bajirao the days when his generals could lead thirty thousand men across the Mutha River towards Kirkee.

The ex-Peshwa loved Religion and Sanskrit Scholarship more than he loved pleasure; and perhaps he loved the married state most of all since he married six young ladies while at Poona and five more while at Bithur; but no son grew up to be his heir. The Nana Sahib who is remembered in connection with the Cawnpore Massacre at the time of the Mutiny was only the adopted son of the last Peshwa of the Mahratta Empire<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Kincaid.

*Note.*—Rajas of Shivaji's line, to whom technically the Peshwas had only been ministers, continued for thirty years to rule as Raja of Sattara, until in 1848 there was no heir to succeed. The kingdom corresponded roughly with the modern Sattara District.





# KEY

## TO THE INDIAN GOVERNMENTS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT.

**POONA** - *THE PESHWA* (whose significance is explained in the Prelude).

**CALCUTTA** - *THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL* (for the Honourable East India Company. When Queen Victoria took over the administration of British India from that Company, the Governor-General began to discharge Viceregal duties as well. His Capital has also since moved to Delhi).

### MARATHA PRINCIPALITIES

<u><b>CAPITAL</b></u>	<u><b>Surname of Maratha Ruling Chief.</b></u>
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GWALIOR	- <i>SCINDIA</i>	} All owed allegiance
BARODA	- <i>GAEKWAR</i>	} to the Peshwa at
INDORE	- <i>HOLKAR</i>	} Poona. (Now the
NAGPUR	- <i>BHONSLE</i>	} first 3 are indepen-
		} dent States. Nagpur
		} is capital of British
		} Central Provinces)
SATARA & KOLHAPUR	- (see Map IV)	both ruled by
		descendants of Shivaji.

**HYDERABAD**- *THE NIZAM*. The founder of this Kingdom was "Nizam" or Viceroy of the Deccan for the Mogul Emperor in Delhi. As the Mogul power waned after Aurangzebe's death, this Viceroy made his own appointment hereditary.

**MYSORE** - Warlike and large (see Map I) under Muslim usurpers, until the death of *TIPU SULTAN* 1799. Then General Arthur Wellesley restored order, more modest boundaries, (see Map IV) and a Hindu Prince of the legitimate dynasty.

# MAP IV INDIA in 1823.

When Lord Hastings returned to England.



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND REMARKS

THE foundations of this booklet are the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. XVIII, Part III*, published in 1885, and *Poona in Bygone Days* by the Maratha Historian, Rao Bahadur D. B. Parasnis. Both books are very hard to obtain. Some explanatory notes have been inserted; and all overlapping of the accounts has not been edited away, since occasional recapitulation is a great help in an elaborate description. Some points of information derived from *Istur Phakde*, a collection of Mr. C. A. Kincaid's articles, published by the Times of India, are acknowledged where they occur.

Our gratitude is due to Mr. A. D. Parasnis, legatee of Rao Bahadur D. B. Parasnis, for permission to reproduce sections from the latter's *Poona in Bygone Days*; to Messrs. Longmans, Green and Company Ltd., for permission to reproduce two Maps from Joppen's *Historical Atlas of India*; and to all who have facilitated the preparation of this book, particularly Colonel D. Fitzmaurice, C.I.E., Master Security Printing India, who has taken great trouble over the reproduction of the maps and illustrations, hard-worked though he is.

The spelling of one word will be found here in several variations. Since Marathi letters have no exact equivalent in the English Alphabet, the English spelling of a Marathi word or name is a matter of aural opinion. Different renderings give the reader a chance to see between which approximations the true pronunciation is heard. Therefore no attempt has been made to standardise the spelling.

There must be many errors in this edition prepared in odd and much interrupted moments by one who has only spent nine months at Poona. These errors can only be corrected if the Knowing should trouble to read it and point them out.

Even with all its shortcomings it is hoped that this booklet may satisfy or, still better, arouse curiosity about the almost unbelievable events witnessed by ground that we also frequent.

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